

# MODERN ARTISTS







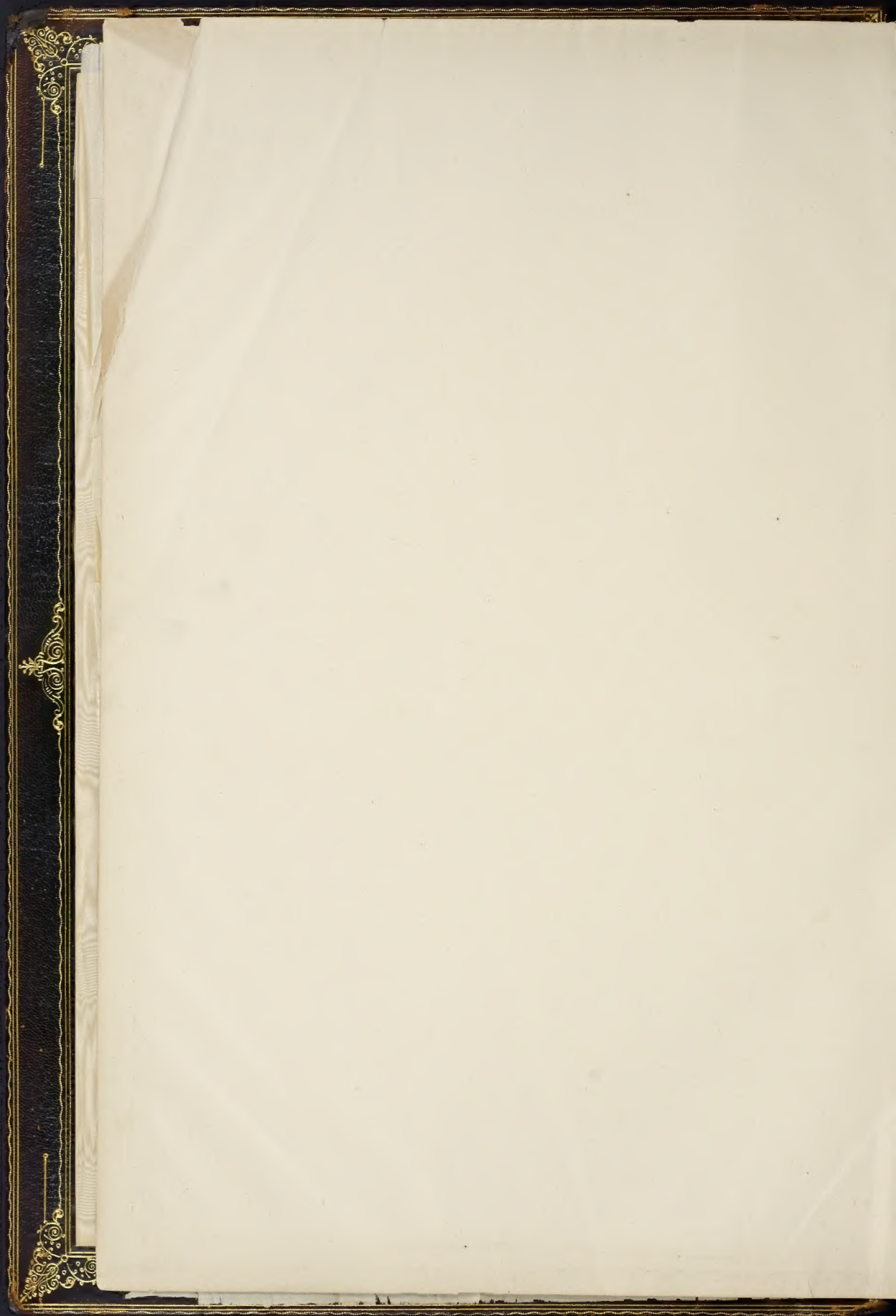




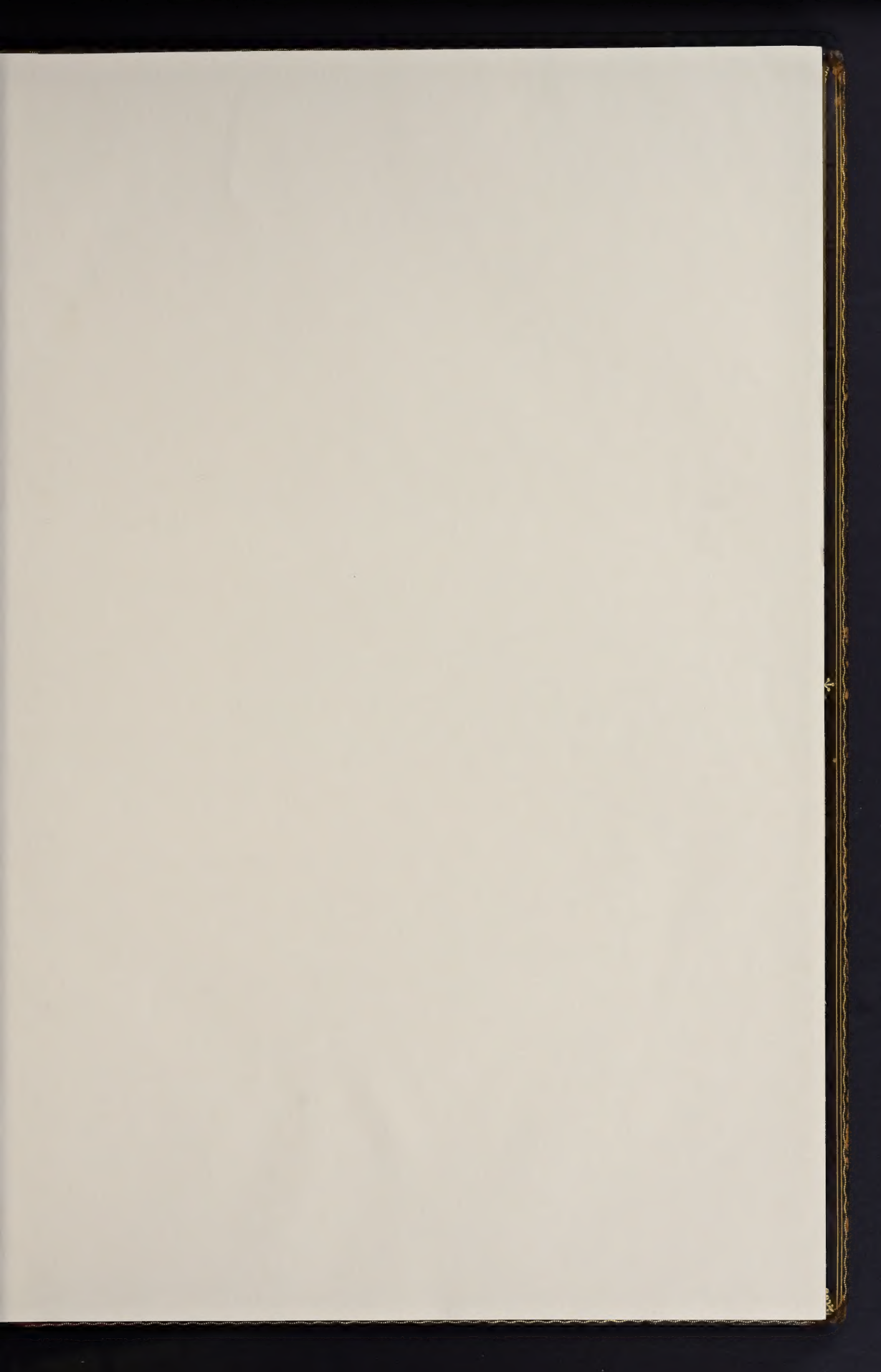




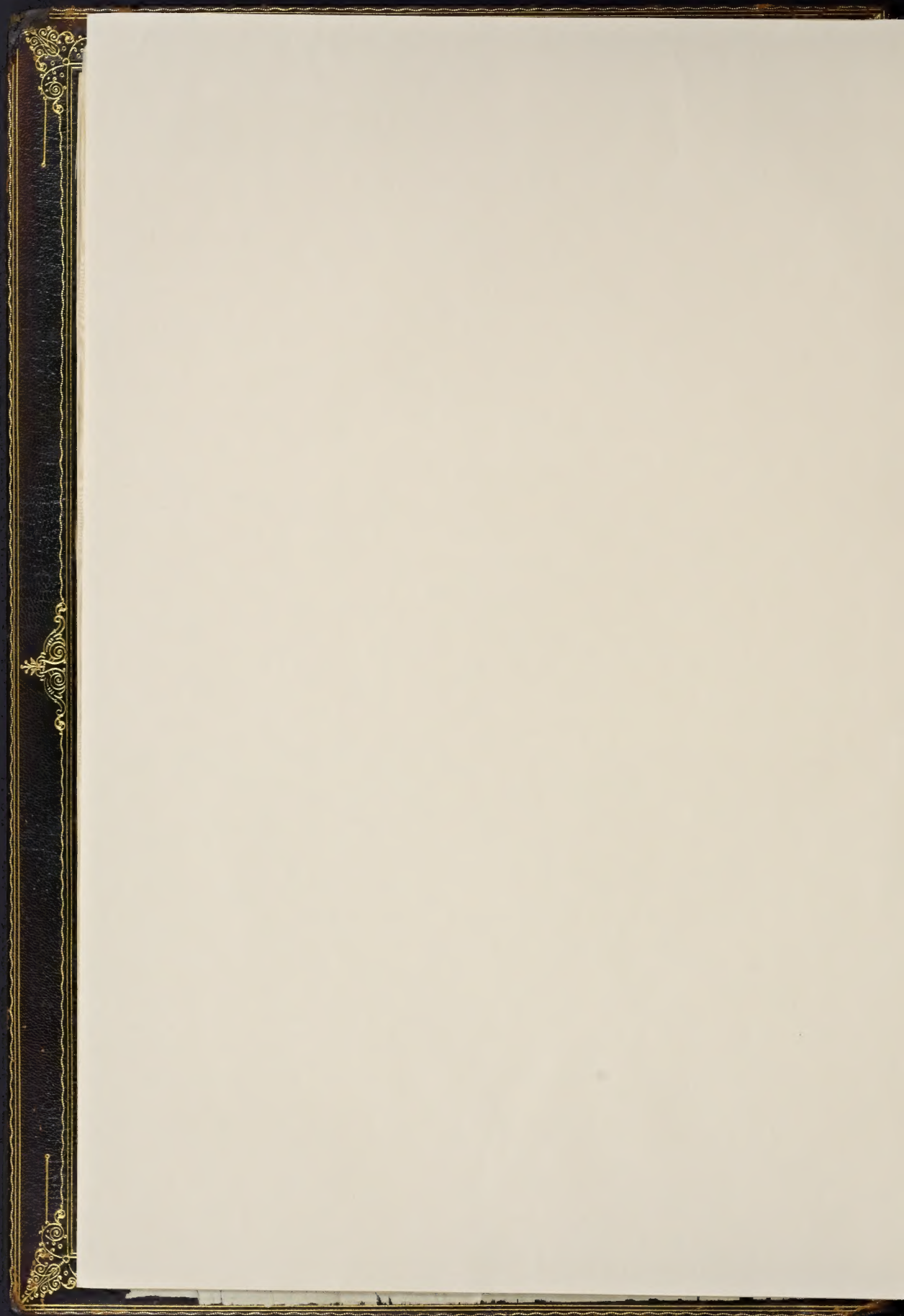








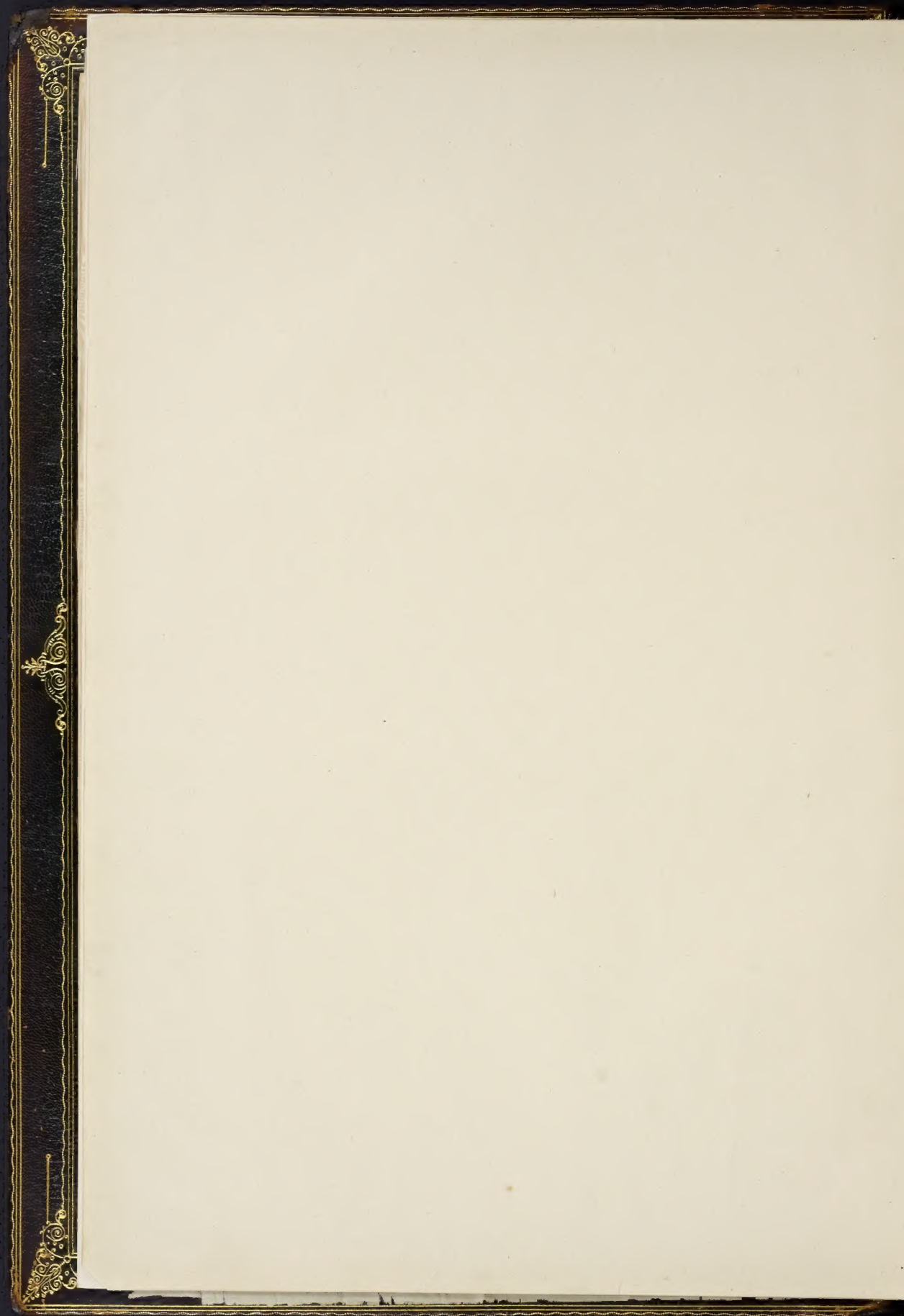














ILLUSTRATED BIOGRAPHIES  
OF  
MODERN ARTISTS

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION

F.-G. DUMAS



PARIS

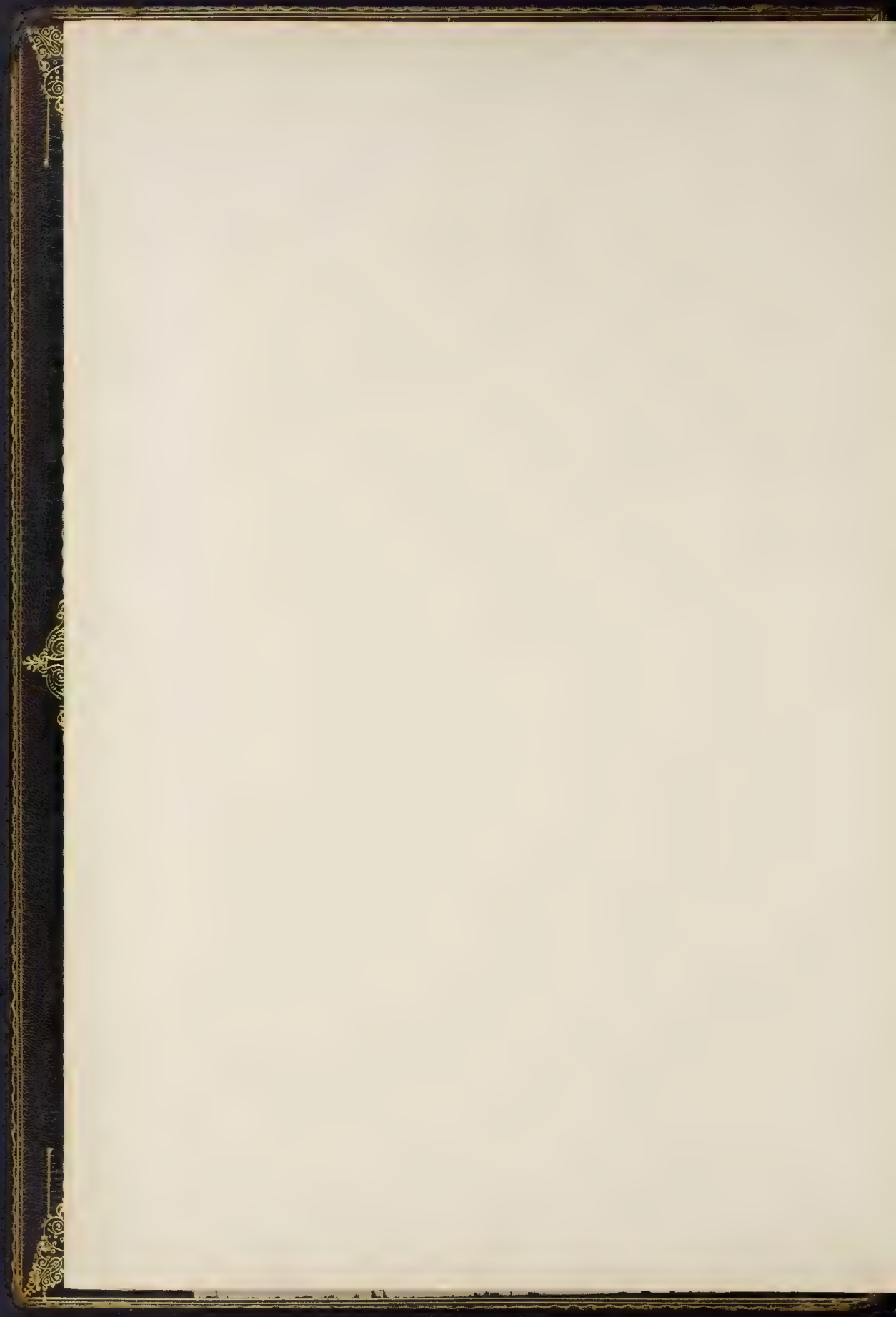
LIBRAIRIE D'ART. LUDOVIC BASCHET

125, BOULEVARD SAINT-GERMAIN, 125





SIR FREDERICK LEIGHTON, P.R.A.







CUPID. (Drawn by Ch. Waltner.)

## SIR FREDERICK LEIGHTON, P.R.A.



FIFTEEN years ago, sitting one May morning with Mr. Watts at Little Holland House, questioning him about Mr. Leighton's *Orpheus* and *Eurydice* — then on the walls of the Royal Academy — and learning much from him as to the points of special achievement, learning in fact where lay the just cause of my own interest and admiration, he suddenly broke off in the very midst of an explanation of the nobility of the aims indicated by the work, and of the strength and weakness proper to a nature which strove after perfection. He broke off from these considerations with, "But you do not know Leighton. If you knew Leighton, you would know that his life is more noble than anything in his work."

If I now venture to repeat these words, it is only to indicate how very imperfect a notice such as this must be, for it must necessarily leave untold all that bears on the life of the man, — all those facts which might shew us the truth of Mr. Watts' words concerning his friend. From these pages must be omitted even that which a worthy curiosity might desire to hear. For it is indeed impossible that one should be greatly attracted by that which a man *does*, without wishing to know something of what he *is*; and yet what he is can only be fully revealed to those who are brought

into close contact with him in his daily life, under the protection of the sacred confidence of intimate ties of blood or friendship. The history of the artist, not of the man, that alone may to-day be written; and this brief outline of the facts which everyone may know, will have at least the value of accuracy as perfect as can be insured by some slight personal knowledge in recent years of Sir Frederick himself, and by the valuable help of those who have witnessed the whole course of his life.

His immediate ancestors were established in Yorkshire, but they came, there is reason to believe, from Shropshire. In Yorkshire, at Scarborough, on the 3rd December, 1830, Sir Frederick was born. His family was not, however, permanently settled in England; his grandfather, the late Sir James Leighton, was for many years the much valued physician of the late Empress of Russia, and also chief of the Medical Department of the Imperial Navy, of which he had the sole direction, together with the patronage of all the offices connected with it. Sir Frederick's father was also a physician, but relinquished his profession at a comparatively early age, in consequence of the delicate state of his wife's health, which induced him to move from place to place on the Continent, in the hope of finding some suitable climate.

In 1839 the family came to Paris; and in the same year, Sir Frederick, then a little boy of nine, saw for the first time an artist's studio — that of George Lance, Haydon's well-known pupil. Lance encouraged the little lad's desire to be an artist; but this desire, it should be remembered, was not awakened by the visit to Lance's studio; it seems to have dated back to the very beginning of consciousness, and to have grown and strengthened daily, without prompting from without. For, during the same eventful year, when a fever had seized upon the child, in the course of which his life was almost despaired of, the dream of its future consecration to art had become a settled purpose, of which the pages of his little sketchbook give plain evidence. The dissuasions of those about him failed to shake his resolution, and on the arrival of the family in Rome (1840-41), Sir Frederick received his first lessons from Signor Meli, making, as indeed early drawings — still preserved — bear witness, astonishingly rapid progress.

But the hours devoted to these special studies were only those which could be well spared from the time claimed by that careful general training, and education, which his father had at heart. Mr. Leighton was himself a scholar, and whilst insisting on the mastery of the dead languages, was deeply sensible of the value of the living; he was well seconded by the natural aptitude and readiness of his son, who, whilst yet a child, read French with the same ease as English. Italian also he acquired with even greater facility.

One evening in the spring of 1879, when the talk in a Milanese drawing-room turned on the newly elected President of the English Royal Academy, two Italians who were present — to whom Sir Frederick was personally unknown — told how a banquet had been recently given by the artists and amateurs of Milan, to Tullo Massarani the well-known author and critic, to which Sir Frederick also had been invited, when it became known that he was in the town. Massarani, the hero of the feast, delivered an eloquent speech, as was of him expected; a speech for the preparation of which he had had ample leisure; but Sir Frederick was also called upon with little or no notice, little or no time to think over or put into shape that which he had to say: his speech was, however, described by these perfectly impartial hearers, as the success of the evening; as more eloquent, more Italian, than that of Massarani himself; spoken, too, with the most perfect accent and manner, full of little turns and delicacies which it seemed impossible that a foreigner should have acquired, and showing complete mastery of a tongue it is specially difficult to speak with perfect accuracy and style.

Mr. Leighton left Rome with his family in the summer of 1842, stopping first at Dresden; the Gallery there was visited, and then Berlin was selected as a halting-place for the winter. During those six months spent in Berlin, his son perfected his command of German — a tongue of which he possessed some knowledge before leaving Italy — and attended the classes of the Berlin Academy. In the following year, Mr. Leighton went south to Munich, and then to Frankfort, where his son went regularly to school. It was not until 1844-5 that the family returned to Italy, and settled for a time at Florence. Here, Mr. Leighton submitted his son's drawings to the well-known American sculptor, Hiram Power, with the earnest request for his unbiassed and candid opinion as to their merit. For Mr. Leighton was naturally unwilling to sanction his son's choice of Art as a profession, unless he could himself be assured that that choice was justified by nothing less than the certain hope of future excellence and eminence. At Mr. Power's desire, the drawings were left with him for a week; and when Mr. Leighton called at the expiration of that time to hear the verdict on which so much seemed to depend, he was met with, "Sir, your son may be as eminent as he pleases; as a rule,

I discourage young lads from becoming artists, but in this case I cannot." And when Mr. Leighton pressed for the positive assurance that Mr. Power's advice was that he should make of his son an artist, the reply was, "That, Sir, it is out of your power to do, Nature has done it for you."

It was in consequence of this decisive opinion that Mr. Leighton now yielded to his son's wish in the choice of a profession; he yielded, but on condition that his general education should be in no wise sacrificed. Sir Frederick was now attending the school of the *Accademia delle Belle Arti* under Bezzuoli and Segnolini, he was following a course of anatomy at the Hospital under Zanetti, and he also began to paint in oil: — his first attempt, a portrait of himself, has been fortunately preserved; for it shews, in the plainest way, promise of exactly those qualities which now mark his work — but other studies were not neglected. The year 1845-6 was again spent at Frankfort, at school; and it was not until he had nearly attained the age of seventeen, that his father permitted him to devote the greater part of his time to special preparation for his chosen work. He was placed, as a pupil of Professor Becker, in the *Stadelsches Institut*; and was thus directly subjected to the peculiar influences of the modern German art revival; but his sympathies seem to have been attracted rather by the school of Düsseldorf, than by its Munich rival, for the work he then most admired in the gallery of the Institute, was Lessing's *Huss before the Council of Constance*.



W. N. G. L. E. S. E. N.

In 1848 came a stay in Brussels, where the acquaintance of Wiertz and Gallait was made; and, during the course of the winter, Sir Frederick produced a picture, — *Cimabue finding Giotto*: which, when afterwards exhibited in Frankfort, was much liked, the colour being held to be one of its chief merits: a second work, *Othello and Desdemona*, was also executed in the same year, but before returning to Frankfort he remained for some time in Paris (1849), occupied with copying in the Louvre, chiefly from the works of Titian and Correggio, and working in the life-school of the Rue Richer.



A. CONIKAN.

During his absence in Brussels and Paris, Sir Frederick had worked without a master; but on coming back to Frankfort he selected Steinle as his guide. The teaching he had received at Florence, whilst only in his fifteenth year, had given a direction to his work which bid fair to become an evil mannerism. Steinle seems, with admirable judgment and taste, to have set himself steadily to combat this bias, and, by his wise advice and able teaching, deeply influenced his pupil. Until he felt sure that he was strong enough to resist the influences which had previously mastered him, Steinle firmly opposed Sir Frederick's eager wish to return to Italy; and with the exception of a visit to England, to the International Exhibition of 1851, — on which occasion he made the acquaintance of Ward, and Frith and Goodall — Sir Frederick remained at Frankfort, from 1850 up to 1852-3, when he left Germany and settled in Rome. At some time during the three years spent at Frankfort, must be placed a short stay in Darmstadt, where Sir Frederick, on the occasion of an artist's festival, executed, in conjunction with Signor Gamba, a humorous fresco on the walls of an

old castle near the town, which still remains, and has recently been protected from the weather by the care of the present Grand Duke.

Amongst the more important work executed at this period must be counted *Tybal and Romeo*, and the *Death of Brunelleschi*; two paintings, the second of which has remained in the possession of Sir Frederick's old master Steinle. In his own hands, also, Sir Frederick still retains a very remarkable coloured cartoon,



which belongs to the same date. It is an illustration of Boccaccio's ghastly story of the Pest in Florence. In the centre, a woman escapes bearing her child at her breast; as she leaves the gates her progress is checked by the appearance of the terrible cart, which, drawn up on her left, receives the corpses heaped upon it by the ruffianly bearers of the dead; on her right a gay company of gallants feast in drunken merriment. One of the band, suddenly stricken, falls headlong from his seat; but the revels only gather fresh spirit, as the living drink "Bon voyage" to the dead. The comparison of this drawing with another of an earlier period — also an illustration of Boccaccio, — which represents Bruno Buffalmacco and Calandrino, going round the corner to the Osteria, having first dressed up a dummy, to make the watchful nuns believe that Buffalmacco is still at work, — shows the nature of the change Steinle's teaching was now beginning to work. In both the drawings, the treatment of the drapery has evidently attracted much of the interest of the artist; but the drapery of the figures in the Pest, has a character which is wanting to the nuns' robes of the earlier study, — a character due not only to the growing sense of its power of expressing the forms which lie beneath it, but to the awakened perception of its constructive value in composition. This point is especially noticeable in the arrangement of the dress of the woman who bears her child from the accursed city; and the movement and expression, also, of all the actors in this drama, seem to show an observation of life, which contrasts with the conventional air and gestures of Buffalmacco and his friend.



P.E.T.

In one respect, however, these two drawings not only resemble each other, but share a characteristic common to all Sir Frederick's work; a characteristic as plainly evident in his boyish efforts at Rome and Florence, as in the matured work of recent years. Even in the quaint portrait of himself, at the age of fifteen, the point chiefly noticeable is the promise given of fine quality of line; — the way in which the transition from one passage to another takes place without unnecessary emphasis, and that continuity of outline is preserved, which is one of the attributes of all noble work. This appears to be the more remarkable, when we find that even before attending the hospital at Florence, Sir Frederick, under the direction of his father, deeply studied anatomy; he read, and examined, and drew, — working at each particular bone and muscle, until he could put it on paper correctly from memory. At Frankfort he had again resumed the pursuit of this special branch of knowledge, proficiency in which has often led artists, less equally endowed, into cutting up their general line by harsh and abrupt indications of the actual shape of underlying forms; losing thereby that impression of strength and beauty which can only be conveyed by the tranquil sweep of unbroken curves.

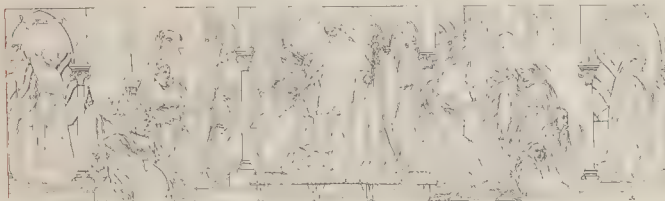


A STUDY.

At last, Steinle saw that his pupil could be safely trusted to return to Italy, and consented to his departure for Rome. Wonderfully receptive by nature, Sir Frederick has always assimilated whatever there might be for him to learn from those with whom he was brought into contact, even from men inferior in power to himself. Technically, at a later period, he learnt much from the veteran Robert Fleury, but Steinle's influence at this critical moment of development left an indelible impression. His advice seems, always, to have been prompted by a generous and unselfish nature, and inspired by a perfect understanding of the character of the talent he was called upon to direct. Since there was no instant need that Sir Frederick should make money by his profession, Steinle wisely insisted that he should perfect himself by every means in his power, before tempting the chances of the Exhibition room, and that competition of the market which does so much to vulgarise the immature. In this way it came to pass that Sir Frederick had reached the age of five-and-twenty when, in 1855, his name appeared for the first time in the catalogue of the Royal Academy.

The picture which he then contributed — *Cinabue's Madonna carried in Procession through the streets of*

*Florence* (Buckingham Palace) — was the chief work of the years passed in Rome, during which was also produced, *The Reconciliation of the Montagues and Capulets over the Bodies of the Lovers* (now in America). At Rome he received the kindly notice of Gibson, and of Cornelius, — an alternative suggestion, for part of the *Cimabue Procession*, from the hand of Cornelius, is still in Sir Frederick's possession — and at Rome, too, began that great friendship with George Mason, which was ended only by Mason's early and lamented death. Those to whom Sir Frederick was then well known, were impressed by the earnestness of his desire to be excellent in all things,



THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS (Fresco in Lyndhurst Church).

by the ready command he had of his own powers, by his proficiency in all exercises of the body, his musical taste and skill (inherited from his mother), and the dash and audacity of his brilliant and — as might be expected — flippant comments on manners and on men. It was hardly possible, indeed, that a man accompanied from his cradle by prophecies of his own future fame, already certain of outstripping his contemporaries in the race, and assured of social success by exactly that kind of person, of manners and of accomplishments which must attract popularity, should wholly conceal his happiness in the possession of these gifts and acquirements: it was hardly likely but that their possession should give a touch to the attitude both of mind and body which displeased those who were unaware of the justice of the pretensions which it indicated. That which is in truth remarkable, is, that even at this date, when in the full flush of youthful life and power, the one great object was not only not forgotten, but its claims were held pre-eminent. The ambition which had fired Sir Frederick's childish hopes was not only for himself; dwelling always among a strange people, he had never forgotten his own country, and his own race. The English boy, drawing in the schools of Italy and Germany, heard daily denial of the claims of his own land; England had no artists and no school. Reynolds, Gainsborough, Wilson, Hogarth, Constable, Turner, and David Cox, were held to be chance exceptions; but this very denial urged him to more strenuous exertion, and deepened the resolve with which he determined, that if Nature had given him the genius, all strength and effort should be devoted to the task, not only of making himself a painter, but of aiding others to become so. And in this spirit, — which indeed has animated all his life — when the *Cimabue Procession* achieved its great success and was purchased by the Queen, a portion of the proceeds was devoted to the giving commissions to less fortunate fellow-workers in Rome. It seems also that this generous love of his own land was recognised as a motive to exertion by those who saw him in these student years. Old Professor Dahlinger had prophesied at Berlin, of the lad of thirteen, that he would one day become "ein bedeutender Künstler;" Cornelius now gave the same verdict in the shape he had divined to be most fitting, "Sie können einmal," he said, "für England etwas sehr bedeutendes werden."

To become something of great importance for England no labour was too great, and friends who knew him well, speak of the unrelenting pains with which the studies for the *Cimabue* picture were gone



DANTE IN EXILE.

through. In the course of 1853 the preliminary stages were worked out, in 1854 the painting was completed, and at the Academy Exhibition of 1855 it achieved noted success. That year my father took me for the first time to the Academy, and I remember therefore with that peculiar distinctness which attaches to impressions received in childhood, the interest the work excited, and the special delight it gave to

Mr. Ruskin; — delight which he expressed more freely in conversation, even, than in his written "Notes."

In the "Notes" Mr. Ruskin drew attention to the "grace and sincerity" by which the work was distinguished, and to the nobility and beauty of the conception of the principal figures, — those of Giotto and Cimabue — but he did not notice, perhaps he did not attach as much importance to, that skill in composition and purity of line which my father specially bade me try and understand. In the "Notes," too, Mr. Ruskin went on to complain, by implication, of want of delicacy of finish; the handling, he also added, was much too broad.

Here it will be therefore well to say that great delicacy of the eyes must from the first have deeply influenced Sir Frederick's method of work and habits of life. For many years he had been forbidden to do any very fine work, or to draw, or paint, or read by artificial light on pain of losing his sight; but the reproach, of want of care, brought by Mr. Ruskin, was absolutely unfounded. There is no doubt, that then, as now, — short of losing eyesight, — there is no sacrifice Sir Frederick would not readily make, no labour he would not willingly bestow, should it seem that the work in hand might be improved. In maturing a subject there are those to whom a stage comes, at which it stands complete and real in the mind: thenceforth the perfect vision commands every energy to its embodiment, and as long as anything is wanting to make its representation



ELECTRA AT THE TOMB OF AGAMEMNON. (Drawn by Ch. Walner)

tation adequate, it is a supreme point of honour with Sir Frederick, as with every true artist, not to withhold the needed labour; not even if that labour seems likely to prejudice the result already obtained. The service which seems to him to be demanded by his own conception, is rendered even when those whose opinion he respects entreat him to stay his hand, even when it is almost certain that added finish will injure the chances of public success, or of sale, which last must necessarily be to anyone without great private means, a most important consideration. After the exhibition of the *Cimabue Procession*, Sir Frederick instead of



returning to Rome settled for some time in Paris in the Rue Pigalle. He had shared the impression made on every one, by the International Exhibition of 1855, at which the French school shewed proudly pre-eminent, and at Paris he was well received by many of its most distinguished men. Ricard, Auguste Mottez, Decamps, Robert-Fleury, Ary Scheffer, Ingres, — whom however he saw but once — were all friendly and encouraging. Ary Scheffer, to whom it was no small exertion, came to visit the young English painter. "Si je n'attachais pas quelque importance à votre talent," he exclaimed, "je ne monterais pas trois escaliers pour vous voir." Scheffer is gone, but the veteran Robert-Fleury still retains the pencil sketch made by Sir Frederick for his *Feigned Death of Juliet*; a picture executed in 1857. The great work of those days, *The Triumph of Music*; — still in the possession of the artist — was completed in the spring of 1856, and was, that same year, exhibited in London. It was very ill received. Those who had most loudly proclaimed their pleasure in the *Cimabue*, now sought, as it were, to balance any want of measure in the admiration then expressed, by the assumption of an attitude of suspicious depreciation. They had been once surprised, and would now be on their guard against too favourable impressions. Now it is impossible to compare the *Cimabue Procession* with the works which followed it and not feel that a large element of caprice entered into the popular attitude, and if we analyse the printed opinions of Mr. Ruskin and other literary critics, we find that if the chorus of praise had been unintelligent, the chorus of blame was still more so. If the one had fastened on the points not specially excellent, the other selected for condemnation points not specially open to censure. Having known to the full the delightful stimulus of success, the painter of *The Triumph of Music* was now to taste all the vexation that an artist must reasonably feel, who finds himself suddenly, he knows not why, out of sympathy with his audience. The praise had come but for a summer, the blame stayed through many seasons, and often even the position of Sir Frederick's works in the Academy seemed to indicate that the professional world was inclined to sympathize with lay opinion.

The year immediately after this defeat (1857) Sir Frederick sent nothing to London, but he had not been idle. During that year, the greater part of which was spent in Paris, he produced — besides *The Feigned Death of Juliet*, already mentioned — *The Fisherman and the Siren*; *Pan*; — a picture the subject of which was taken from Keats; *Samson Agonistes* (for which studies had been made in Algiers); and a *Nymph and Cupid*. Two of these works — *The Death of Juliet*, and *The Fisherman and the Siren*, — appeared on the walls of the



NAUSICAA (Drawn by Ch. Walters.)

Academy in the following summer, which Sir Frederick spent in London; where he was cordially received by Millais, Rossetti, and Holman Hunt, and worked in a studio lent him by a friendly Academician — Mr. Elmore. The winter was passed at Rome, where he painted *La Nanna*, a study, which he contributed to the Exhibition of 1859, together with *Sunny Hours*, and *Pavonia*. The course of the summer found him at Capri, where many studies were made, amongst others, one exhibited at the Hogarth Club, — a pencil drawing of a grand lemon tree, of which not a leaf has been suffered to escape, nor even the little creeping snail on his shining path across the blooms.

This drawing had to be done out of doors by morning light, and to be completed in spite of all the baffling difficulties which attend the portrait of a tree in growth; and long before he had been brought into contact with popular "modern" ideas in painting, in the early Frankfort days, Sir Frederick had not only made studies out of doors, but had painted pictures with an out-of-door top light, with just the same realistic aims as characterize this study of a lemon tree, but always — as is also evident from the same drawing — seeking in the first place to learn from Nature those forms which she employs to give perfect expression to the generic truths of life. "Lieber Leighton," once said Cornelius, "selbst die Natur hat Styl." A fact which perhaps anyone but a German would have stated differently, for to Nature only in her lavish outbursts of creation are known the deepest secrets of style. It is certainly impossible to see much of Sir Frederick Leighton's work without becoming aware that he is penetrated with the conviction that the signs of style must be sought in



A. L. E. 1859

life, — that they cannot be successfully mimicked by compliance with any school recipe. Art is to him a living power which has work to do in the present: he knows that he who aspires to follow in the footsteps of the great masters — who reign, and must forever reign supreme — must live even as they did, in the life of his own day: he must strive, as far as in him lies, to do — not as he imagines he might have done, had he lived then, but as he may conceive they would have done had they lived now.

The two landscapes, *Capri (Sunrise)*; and *Capri (Pagano's)*; which appeared at the Exhibitions of 1860 and 1861, both shewed, as plainly as other work, that in spite of that passionate enjoyment of colour, which led his Frankfort friends to pronounce him a colourist, his main pre-occupation was form and line. The very choice of site, in both these works — as in the many memoranda, and studies of landscape, more recently executed — shews a native and intense appreciation of fine constructive lines. With the second work — *Capri (Pagano's)*, — Sir Frederick exhibited, in 1861, four other paintings: *Paolo and Francesca*; *A Dream* (a mystic picture painted for Mrs. Sandbach); *S. O., a study*; — a very noble, fresh and charming portrait of his sister, Mrs. Sutherland Orr, which had the direct and dignified and perfectly feminine charm of some of Gérard's best studies of women; and *Lieder ohne Worte* (J. Stewart Hodgson, Esq.) — a work which, as was noticed at the time, was hung high above the line, in a way conspicuously unworthy of its merits. In the following year Sir Frederick contributed six works: — *Star of Bethlehem*; *Sisters*; *Michael Angelo Nursing his Dying Servant*; *Duet*; *Sea Echoes*; and *Odalisque*. The last had a great popular success; it was delicately engraved by Lumb Stocks, R. A., and reiterated applications came in to the painter for repetitions of the work. But to repeat a subject to order, to do again, and again, that which had been once done could not satisfy a man supremely ambitious in his art, supremely loyal to himself and to his own aims and aspirations.



C. L. E. 1861

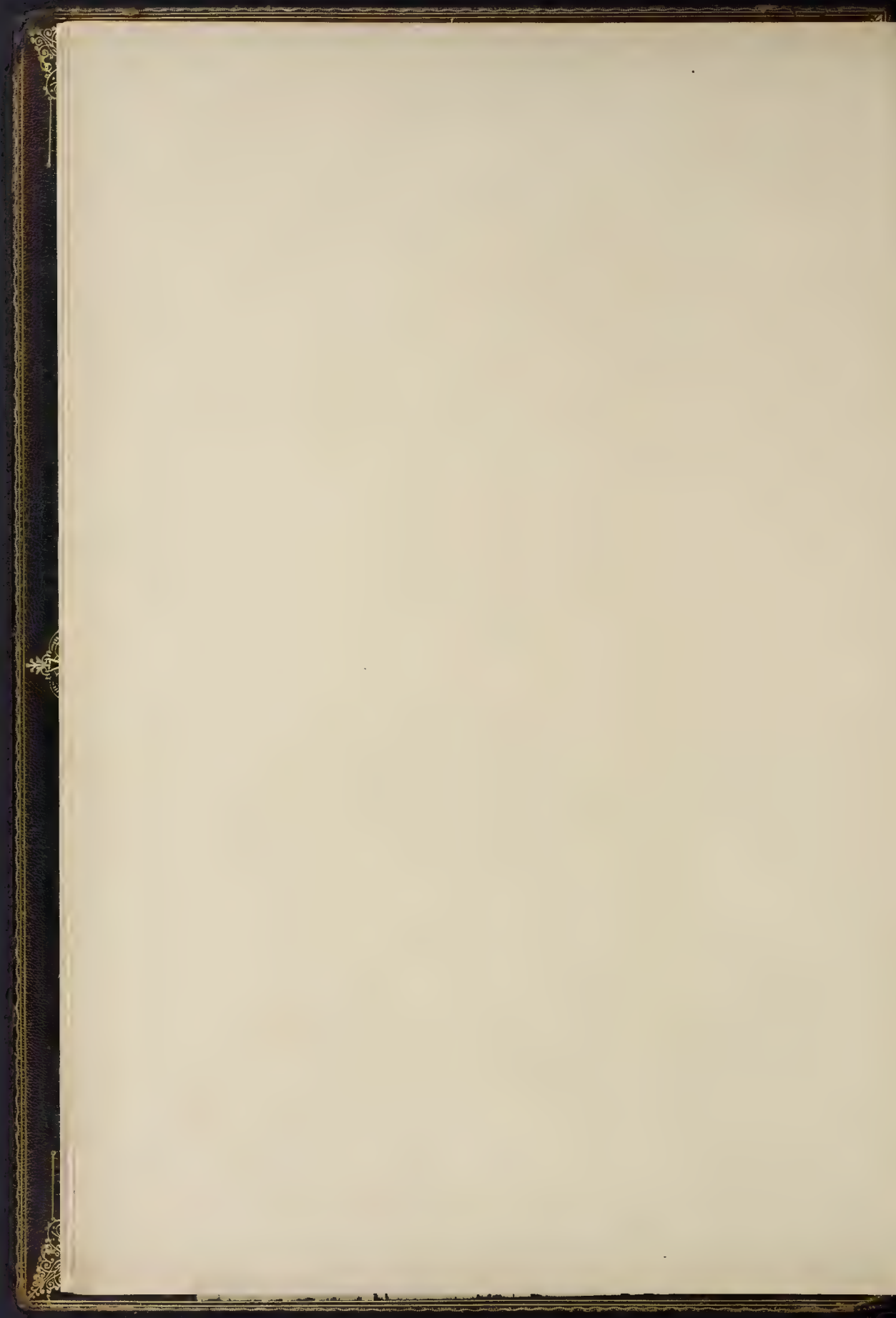
The year 1863 brought, not another *Odalisque*, but — *Jezebel* and *Ahab met by Elijah the Tishbite*; *A Girl with a Basket of Fruit*; *An Italian Crossbowman*; and *A Girl Feeding Peacocks*. To the story of Orpheus, Sir Frederick returned a second time in 1864, the year in which he was elected an Associate of



STUDY FOR THE DAPHNephora

by the artist, S. F. C. P. R. A.







THE CHURCH PROCESSION  
 Engraved by J. H. P. in S. J. P. L. M. A. P. R. A.





the Royal Academy, when he also gave us, *Dante in Exile*, and *Golden Hours* (the late Mr. Benzon), a work which seems to have arrested public attention by a certain glow and beauty of colour, such as was noticed in the *Lieder ohne Worte* of 1861. The *Girl Feeding Peacocks* was an English subject, but the *Girl with a Basket of Fruit*, again showed the firm hold which the early study of classical literature had taken of the painter's imagination.

Although the exigencies of his profession necessarily prevented the continuous application without which that thorough command of the language, which we call scholarship, is alone possible, Sir Frederick was deeply imbued with the true spirit of Greek story; and gradually as he worked out of his early manner, which was not free from the influence of the Romantic movement, towards a greater simplicity, both in the conception and treatment of his subject, classic motives more and more frequently suggested themselves. The year 1865, which saw *David*; *Mother and Child*; *Widow's Prayer*; and *In St. Mark's*; saw also, *Helen of Troy*; and in 1866, together with *Painter's Honeymoon*; and, *Mrs. James Guthrie*, Sir Frederick exhibited, *Syracusan Brides leading Wild Beasts in Procession to the Temple of Diana*; — a work which obtained for its author such a marked measure of success as had been unknown to him since the appearance of the *Cimabue*



THE DAPHNEPHORIA

*Procession*. In the course of the same year (1866) Sir Frederick made a long tour in Spain, having some while previously crossed the frontier for a few days, when visiting the South of France, in order to study architecture, to which he has at different times devoted much attention. There is indeed some doubt as to the exact date of this second, longer, and more important stay, but it seems to be fixed pretty certainly, by the fact that in the list of Sir Frederick's contributions to the Exhibition of 1867, appears : *A Spanish Dancing Girl*; *Cadiz in the old Times*. But the picturesque attractions of Spain did not disturb for a moment the steady current of the painter's aims. The *Spanish Dancing Girl*; and *The Knuckle-bone Player*; had for companions, — *A Roman Mother* (Geo. Aitchison, Esq., A. R. A.); *Venus Disrobing for the Bath* (T. Eustace Smith, Esq., M. P.); and a *Pastoral*, — a sketch of which has been engraved in M. Charles Blanc's *Artistes de mon temps*.

It was shortly after his return from Spain, about the end of September, 1866, that Sir Frederick removed from the rooms at No. 2, Orme Square — which he had occupied ever since he settled in England — to the house which had been built for him in Holland Park Road by his friend Mr. Aitchison, and which he still inhabits. In addition to his various contributions to the Academy and other Exhibitions he undertook at about this date the fresco of the *Wise and Foolish Virgins*, in the village church of Lyndhurst. Sir Frederick, who has been all his life long a great "cuisinier," perpetually making experiments of fresh methods and vehicles, here employed a medium composed of copal varnish mixed with oil of lavender, wax, and resin, which had already been successfully used by Mr. Gambier Parry in the decoration of the ceiling of the nave of Ely Cathedral. The composition, which has become well known by photographs taken on the

spot, is disposed with grave symmetry; the figure of Christ occupies the centre, on the right are the Wise, on the left hand the Foolish, Virgins; the disposition of the figures against the architectural background shews throughout that thorough respect for the wall, which is an indispensable condition of all successful mural decoration: the admirably constructive character of the draperies is especially worthy of remark, and the manner in which this important work was carried out illustrates the extraordinary readiness with which the painter always has his full powers at command. It is well known that many of his works, such as portraits, have been executed in odd hours and half-hours, but the Lyndhurst fresco affords an even more marvellous instance

of this rare faculty, for it was executed almost wholly on Saturday afternoons, when leaving town by the midday train, Sir Frederick drove to the church and then worked till dusk.

Before the fresco was completed, Sir Frederick was able to put into execution a project which he had long desired to carry out, and to visit Greece. By way of Vienna, the Danube, Varna, Constantinople, Broussa, Smyrna, and Rhodes, he arrived at Athens, and the magnificent remains of her architecture made on him an impression deeply felt and never to be rivalled. The scenery, too, of the Greek islands and the shores of the Ægean, was of a character which appealed with the utmost force to the instinct for beautiful line, which is a predominant feature of his talent; and its influence was evident in the works he exhibited in 1868. First on the list stands *Jonathan's Token to David*, and *Mrs. F. P. Cockerell*; but, *Actæa*, *the Nymph of the Shore*; *Acme and Septimius*; and *Ariadne Abandoned by Theseus*, prove that the visit to Greece and the Greek islands had brought new visions of the themes with which the painter's imagination had from childhood been familiar.

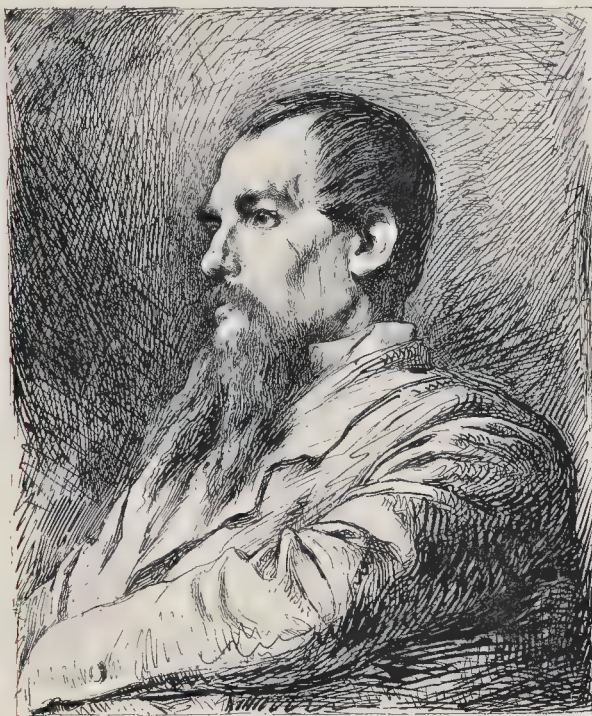


LA NANNA. (Drawn by Ch. Waltner.)

In 1869, the year after Sir Frederick became a full Academician, he exhibited his diploma picture, *St. Jerome*; and produced also *Helios and Rhodes*, (J. Reiss, Esq.); *Dædalus and Icarus*, (T. Eustace Smith, Esq., M.P.); and, *Electra at the Tomb of Agamemnon*. This last work, which is the property of Lady Marian Alford, is, perhaps, the most perfect example of its class. For, as might be expected, from an artist whose faculties are aroused and stimulated in the first place always, by beautiful form, Sir Frederick rarely seeks to embody those passions, the energy of which requires for their representation, that poetic exaggeration which too surely disturbs the pure impression of strength and perfection. The grief of *Electra* is too weary for passion; all tears have been wept, and no deforming sob or cry shakes the silence of her anguish. The slender shape swathed in long robes of mourning, stands rigid and erect as the fair column on which she has placed the tribute sacred to her father's tragic fates; sorrow-laden she has descended the steps which lead from life to the house of death, and leaving behind her the witness of blue skies and budding leaves, alone and motionless she fronts the vision of her sick despair.

A visit to Egypt, which Sir Frederick paid in the autumn of this year (1869), diverted his attention for a while from classical subjects, and renewed another and an earlier class of impressions. The journey up

the Nile was made in a steamer put at his disposition by the Khedive, and a ride to the Salt Lakes was undertaken in company with M. de Lesseps, and a party of friends. But although *A Nile Woman*, was his sole contribution to the Exhibition of 1870, in 1871, the great size and importance of his chief work, — *Hercules Wrestling with Death for the Body of Alcestis* (B. Samuelson, Esq., M. P.); and the character of its two companions, — *Greek Girls Picking up Pebbles by the Seashore* (Right Hon. J. Chamberlain, M. P.); and, *Cleoboulus Instructing his daughter Cleoboulina* (the late Mr. Benzon); shewed that his stay in Egypt had not even temporarily disturbed the supreme hold of Athens.

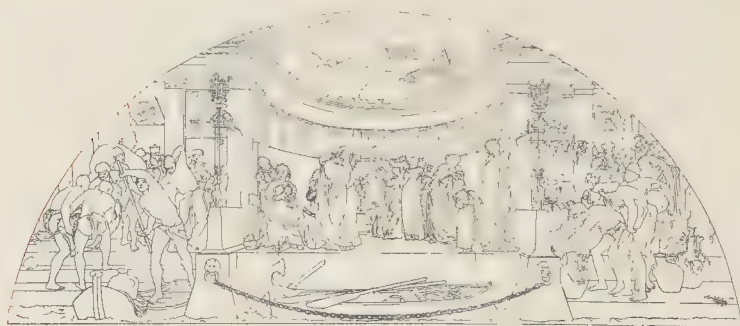


CAPTAIN BURTON. (Drawn by Ch. Waltner.)

*Summer Moon* (A. Morrison, Esq.), one of Sir Frederick's most popular compositions, made its appearance at the Academy in 1872, together with *The Right Honourable Sir Edward Ryan, Secretary to the Dilettante Society* (for the Society); *A Condottiere*; and *After Vespers*, — a pretty picture of a lovely young woman, whose eyes are full of dreamy exaltation. *Summer Moon* was poetically represented by two girls, who, curled against each other, had fallen asleep upon their marble seat, in the circular embrasure of a wall open to the blue depths of a Southern night. It belongs to a certain class of the painter's work, which, though it does not indeed so well express the loftiness of his aims, yet seems in some respects to shew the peculiar character of his talent, better than that which embodies his more ambitious aspirations. It was succeeded in the following year (1873) by *Weaving the Wreath*; and *The Industrial Arts of Peace*; a large decorative design



carried out for a lunette in the South Kensington Museum; and a journey to Damascus in the autumn brought us, in 1873, *Old Damascus*; *Jews Quarter*; and a *Moorish Garden*. At first sight, subjects such as these would seem likely only to yield a motive for purely picturesque treatment, but in art, as in literature, severe studies, seriously pursued, leave an indelible trace on all forms of expression, and in both these pictures we find the large quality of style proper to Sir Frederick's more important work. The inner court of the Jew's house is peopled by a group of women and girls. The building itself is full of lovely colour and light; on the right rise the tall shafts of a row of lemon trees, their laden branches supported on a lofty green trellis. One woman stands beneath, engaged in knocking off the fruit, whilst a little girl extends her skirts in both hands, watching for its fall, and others, to the left, look on. The shadeless brilliance of the colour, which was one of the great attractions of the early *Cimabue Procession*, has the charm of great delicacy; and the grace of the movements and gestures of the figures confer a certain dignity of aspect which is not wanting also to the *Moorish Garden*. The whole scene here wears a strangely fanciful aspect, as of enchanted fairy land. In the distance, from out of the foliage, the serrated edges of a far-off palace-roof strike against the



THE ARTS OF PEACE. (Lunette in the South Kensington Museum.)

sky; down the centre, beneath the rapidly succeeding green arches which festoon across it, runs a little stream, and by its margin in the near foreground passes a child playing with two peacocks one white, the other blue. But these fair visions were only the offspring of the lighter moments of a year of labour, the chief of which had been bestowed upon the *Antique Juggling Girl* (Sir C. Mills, M. P.); and *Clytemnestra, from the Battlements of Argos, watches for the Beacon Fires which are to announce the Return of Agamemnon* (Mr. Pearse). The *Antique Juggling Girl* is a fine example of the artist's persistent will to combine, at once, all the means both of sensuous and intellectual enjoyment; the special character of the form represented may have been the inciting cause of production; the lines of the composition may have been chosen so that they would fitly serve the ends of sculpture; but the pleasures of colour are called into play even as they were summoned to enhance the impression of *Lieder ohne Worte*, or of *Golden Hours*; and no chance of appeal to the eye in delicate imitation of lovely surfaces of flesh, and texture of soft stuffs, is suffered to escape. The girl stands fronting us, her feet pressing on a leopard's skin. At her back rises a white screen framed in gold, and on this ground the pliant lines of the figure are defined, the warm flesh tints deriving an added richness from the cool tone against which they glow. She casts two oranges into the air, and watches for their descent with outstretched hands. Her draperies have fallen to the ground, partly covering the base of the screen decorated with a frieze of dancing figures; close by her feet, to the left, stand a vase and other implements of her craft. The screen does not fill the whole background, but on each side of it we catch the clear bluish grey of a bright sky above the thick fruit and foliage of an orange grove. The effect of tone produced on the eye is transparently luminous, the picture shines with subdued radiance as of ivory enriched with gold, and this effect is heightened by the science with

which all the strongest colour has been massed at the base of the composition; the dark leopard-skin, the folds of crimson stuff, — crimson running into blood purple, — and the deep gold of the vase — on the lip of which rests a vivid scarlet tassel dropping from the rod inserted in its mouth. The edge of this first step is, as it were, accentuated by a line of light given by the white drapery, to which succeed, on either side of the screen, the dark tones which tell where the orange trees spring from the ground, — tones which become clearer and less marked till they break on the open sky. Thus all the deeper hues of the background and accessories combine to form enframing wings of colour, which spread away from the feet of the figure rising in their midst, against the white screen. The painting of the flesh is, as usual, wrought to finish of a quality which seems too polished to those who take great pleasure in the signs of free play of the brush; but it is finish full of intention; it stands for something the painter has meant to do in justice to his own conception, not for something which he concedes in order to attract or please the public.

The *Clytemnestra* shewed the same thoroughness, the same style of line, the same intellectual aim, in the service of a motive of a very different order. The *Clytemnestra* of Æschylus stands alone on her battlements,



THE ARTS OF WAR. Lunette, in the South Kensington Museum)

and watches for the fires which shall flash from peak to peak the news of the fall of Troy, and the return of Agamemnon. The pictorial contrast is to be found in the perfect calm and repose of external matter, as opposed to the storm of passion working out towards desperate resolve.

Air sleeps, from strife and stir the clouds are free.  
The holy time is quiet as a Nun  
Breathless with adoration.

The opposing crest of rugged mountain above, the clear waters beneath are steeped in silence. The straight descending line of a flagstaff, on the right, accents the erect pose of the motionless figure; and the solemn impression of this vertical line is heightened by the disposition of the drapery. The folds, which escape the nervous grip of the tight clenched hands, drop straight to the feet, and the mass, which hangs from the left shoulder, descends to the ground with a mighty sweep. In the face of the Queen herself, the full meaning of this statuesque quiet is revealed. She gazes outwards, and from her eyes we learn that all the forces of life are sucked into a struggle too absorbing to admit of speech or gesture.

The works which immediately followed on the *Clytemnestra* were not of the same heroic character. *Little Fatima*; *A Portion of the Interior of the Grand Mosque of Damascus* (another study of which was carried out for Sir William Armstrong during the same year), in which the drawing of the Arabesque patterns on tiles and carpets, was triumphantly dexterous; — *Eastern Slinger Scouring Birds in Harvest*; *Moonrise*; — a figure which shewed as a statue of bronze against the golden afterglow; — *Portrait of Mrs H. E. Gordon*; and

a *Venetian girl*; — engraved by Cousins and called *Moretta*, remarkable not only for the beauty of the face, but also for the splendid quality of colour got into the green of her gown; — all these were seen at the Academy in 1875. The celebrated *Portrait of Captain Burton*, which was amongst the works exhibited by Sir Frederick at the International Exhibition in 1878, appeared first in London in 1876, together with *Teresina*; *Paolo*; and finally *The Daphnephoria* (J. Stewart Hodgson, Esq.). The procession of the *Daphnephoria* was solemnized at Thebes every ninth year, in honour of the Ismenian Apollo. At the head of the procession walked a noble and beautiful youth called the *Daphnephoros*, behind him followed his nearest kinsman bearing a mystical instrument which consisted of a piece of olive-wood surmounted by a brazen globe from which smaller ones were suspended: the globe on the top indicated the Sun, the one immediately below the first symbolized the Moon, the smaller globes represented the Stars. Garlands of laurels and flowers entwined the rod both above and below, and the total number being three hundred and sixty-five stood for the days of the year. Next came the priest, bearing a laurel branch, and behind him marched a choir of maidens singing, and bearing boughs in their hands. This last group is the happiest portion of the picture, full of

signal beauties and delicacies freshly observed, and fluttering with a life and grace which contrasts with the heavier and more formal movements of some of the male actors.

The same effective rendering of girlish grace and freshness distinguished the almost too exquisite prettiness of a *Music Lesson*, which was first exhibited in 1877, the memorable year in which the great bronze group, *Athlete Wrestling with a Python* (here reproduced in etching by M. A. Gilbert); on which Sir Frederick had been principally engaged for nearly three years, — was the success of the Exhibition. It had always been felt by those who most keenly appreciated the special quality of his talent, that it would in all probability prove even more effective in sculpture, than in painting, and although the completed group necessarily lacks something of that spontaneous air which gave a



THE STUDIO (North).

peculiar grandeur to the first sketch, it is scarcely missed in the impression made by the sincerity of the general aspect, the splendid thoroughness of the workmanship, and the tenacious vigour of the style.

But *The Athlete*, and *The Music Lesson*, were not the only contributions made under Sir Frederick's name in this year (1877); he shewed also a *Study*, and a *Portrait of Miss M. Mills* (Sir C. Mills, M.P.); and before the summer was out, when he left England for a visit to Spain and Morocco, the projects for *Elijah*, for *Nausicaa* and for *Winding the Skein by the Seashore*, were all far advanced. The last two works appeared at the Academy of 1878, but the *Elijah* went with other works to the International Exhibition, and was exhibited in London in 1879. Together with *Elijah*, the same season brought us a full-length *Portrait of Lady Brownlow*, a study; and *Biondina*; *Caterina*; *Amarilla*; and *Neruccia*, four studies of beautiful young women, amongst which, that of *Neruccia* is, perhaps, the most noteworthy. In the Grosvenor Gallery, also, were some ten or twelve smaller works and sketches by his hand.

It is impossible to include within these limits anything like an exhaustive catalogue of all Sir Frederick's published work; but besides his pictures at the Academy in the year 1880: — *Sister's Kiss*; *Iostephane*; *Light of the Harem*; *Psamathe*; and *Crenaia*; in addition to much that has been exhibited recently at the Grosvenor,



and the works he has sent to various foreign or international exhibitions, many will remember his early contributions to the Hogarth Club, more than twenty years ago, amongst which were some studies bought by the Prince of Wales, and two heads of women in water colour, now in the possession of Mr. Aitchison.



THE STUDIO, East

Nearly all these were executed in oils, and, although he works in water-colour with great facility — Mr. Stewart Hodgson possesses a charming drawing of a girl asleep in a marble room — with one exception, a drawing of a *Negro Festival* (the late Mr. Jonathan Tonge); made during an early visit to Algiers, and much liked by his friends, Sir Frederick has never employed this medium on a large scale.

As a book illustrator he has rarely tried his fortune, but we owe to him an excellent series of drawings made for *Romola*; one of the *Great God Pan*; which accompanied a poem of Mrs. Browning's in

the *Cornhill Magazine*; and an illustration made at the request of the author, an old and valued friend, the late Mrs. Sartoris, for *A Week in a French Country House*; a story which also appeared in the *Cornhill* during the editorship of Thackeray.

Many years ago Thackeray, fresh from Rome, entered Millais' studio with — "Well, Johnnie, my boy, I haven't come to see your pictures, but to see you; and to tell you I have met the most versatile young dog ever heard of, in Rome. His name's Leighton, and if you don't mind, he'll run you hard for the Presidentship one day." In November 1878, Thackeray's prediction was realized. Sir Frederick became President of the Royal Academy, was knighted a few days after his election, and Millais himself, in a most interesting speech made at the dinner given in Sir Frederick's honour by the Arts Club, told the little story. The



THE STUDIO WITH ALCOVE WEST

post Sir Frederick now holds, if it is the highest the profession can bestow, entails heavy responsibilities, claims the costly sacrifice of much time, and demands peculiar gifts. That very versatility which Thackeray specially noted; the immense variety of Sir Frederick's acquirements; his readiness in employing his own powers; his admirable self command; and the genuine interest and pleasure which he feels in all good work, however different to his own, specially fit him for his duties.

And here it may be said that the very furniture of his house bears witness to the owner's enjoyment of the most various forms of art, and to his admiration for the great work of all great men. Supreme allegiance is paid to Phidias, and the sculptors of the pan-Athenaic frieze, and due honour to the little bronzes and terra-cottas of those nameless men whose every touch marked their perfect sense of life and truth: there are studies after Michel-Angelo, all the great

masters of the Tuscan school are held in deepest reverence, but the gorgeous effulgence of Venetian colour — the work of Titian, of Tintoret, of Schiavone, and of their predecessors — keeps its place and yet leaves room for records of the performance of modern days. There are panels by Corot in his finest mood, drawings by Ingres, paintings by Delacroix, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Daubigny, Watts, Constable, Costa, Mason, and Armstrong, potteries from Rhodes, Persia and Japan, tiles from Damascus, and embroidered stuffs from both East and West. The grotesques of Japan are indeed excluded, for beauty of form and style of line are, to the President, the essential element of artistic beauty.

However great may be the diversity of opinion on this point, however various may be the theories as to what should be the ultimate criterion of Art, no one can deny the loyalty of the President to his own standard of well-doing, no one can deny the thoroughness of the labour he exacts from himself in its service. Beneath the graceful draperies of *Nausicaa*, we know that the figure has been wrought as if meant to meet our gaze in naked beauty, we know that every line of the composition has been matured by months of careful study, and that the very lines of the picture-frame have been designed by the master's hand.

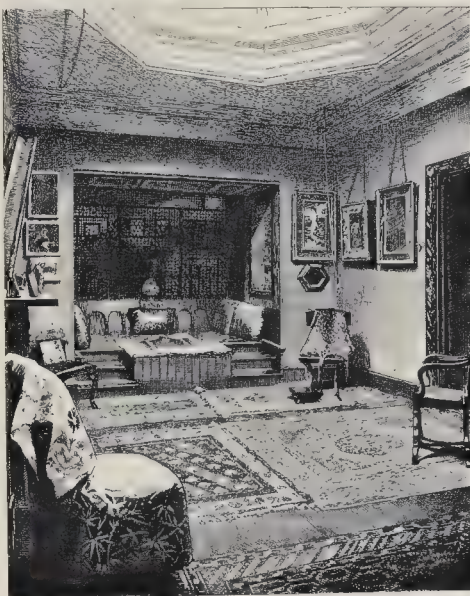


When once the subject has been selected, much time is always spent in determining the aspect under which it shall be presented. Various projects for the composition, and for the different figures and groups, are then made — rough sketches in chalk on tinted paper — until at last that arrangement is arrived at which promises to be the best. At this point, Sir Frederick draws out his design with exact accuracy in pencil on a scale only large enough to shew the forms, and it is generally found that the various modifications possible have been so thoroughly exhausted that any change in the final project, if made, is rarely a change for the better.

Once, however, in early days good counsel was responsible for an alteration made at the last moment. The first finished pencil sketch for the *Cimabue Procession*, still in Sir Frederick's possession, shews the various groups following each other straight across the picture; it was not until this sketch was complete that that alternative suggestion was made by Cornelius, which has already been alluded to. The suggestion, made by Cornelius, was that the procession should turn, and Sir Frederick, with characteristic readiness, at once destroyed all that was done as soon as he saw the possibility of doing it better.

The general lines of the composition having been fixed, either the original drawing, or an accurate tracing is then squared up, and the figures are sketched on the canvas: next comes the task of construction, the work of building up each part into the whole, — studies of each figure in the nude are made, with the extremities drawn again separately to a larger scale, and every fold of drapery is elaborated with the same accurate pains; elaborated not only so as to reveal the form it clothes, but also with the intention of obtaining from it its full value as a constructive member of what may be called pictorial architecture. This intention, which is first evident in the early drawing of the *Pest at Florence* (1850-51), is specially marked in the fresco at Lyndhurst, and again in the two large decorative compositions prepared for the lunettes in the South Kensington.

The designs for these lunettes, one of which has now been carried out, represent the *Arts of Peace and War*. Girls and women, who have been bathing, form the central group of the *Arts of Peace*; a boat is moored across the landing-steps, and within the semicircular space above, discreetly parted off from the busy quays on either hand, the bathers stand on a costly carpet, surrounded by attendants who wait on them with all the high wrought personal luxuries of an elaborate civilisation. Above the curves of the colonnade behind shew the lines of a landscape designed with choice reserve. To the fair quiet of this central subject a strong contrast is afforded by the animation of the groups on either side. On the right, are the strong men, toiling who bear the burdens of commerce; unloading heavy bales of merchandise, or putting forth on a bold venture in the frail bark loaded to the edge by its precious freight. On the left, are gathered the eager crowd of wine-sellers who bring down the beautiful amphora in which is stored the juice of the grape, whilst behind them,



THE SMALLER STUDIO



in the shady doorway of the theatre, a boy and girl lounge idly amused, unheeding the fateful masks of tragedy and comedy suspended above their heads. The varied hues of the flesh, in both the side groups, lead up to the central subject — the fair-skinned women seen within their marble frame — and the study of



THE VESTIBUL.

the draperies of these figures, taken in conjunction with the architectural lines of the background, by which the whole arrangement of the composition is to a great extent determined, will clearly shew the principle which has regulated their treatment. The *Arts of War*, as an illustration of Sir Frederick's employment of drapery, is again even more important. In this design, the central gate of a great city, with galleries running

along behind the fortified walls and houses on either side, forms the key and base of the whole scheme. To the right are cross-bowmen, pages waiting on their lords, armourers and warriors proving their weapons; on the left are men and youths, aided by their squires, and engaged in fitting on their harness, whilst maidens



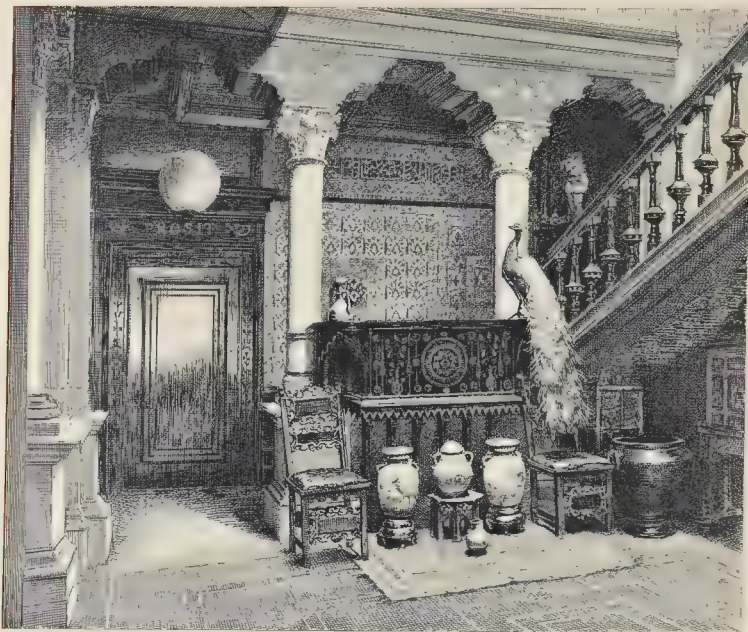
THE ARAB HALL

dark and fair, seated on the steps below, broider the banners to be carried to the war. In every part of this composition the office assigned to drapery is most important, the very forms of the full sleeves worn by many of the actors are employed with distinct and special purpose in the building up of the design, and the lines of the soft stuffs, worn by the bevy of girls who ply the needle, are selected with a view to the formation of strong shapes on which may be reared the whole superstructure of busy crowd and overhanging galleries.

To obtain such a result as this, great labour and forethought in the preparation of the preliminary studies



is evidently necessary, every fold must be laid in, in accordance with the principles which have guided the arrangement of the whole design, and it is not until this stage is reached and every great line of the composition is irrevocably determined, that an oil sketch for the colour is made. Yet, after all these pains have been expended, when every step has been assured with the most deliberate and tenacious care, we find, when the work itself is actually in progress, that each figure will be first painted complete in the nude before the draperies, which have been the subject of so much zealous study, are laid over it. Often, too, not content with all these preliminary safeguards, Sir Frederick models, as well as draws, the figures which form part of his subject, and in this way the studies for the *Daphnephoria* brought us a charming little terra-cotta group of three of the singing girls



THE HALL.

in the front ranks of the procession; a group of which the lively grace and delicate movement recalled the harmonious spirit in which are conceived the statuettes of Tanagra.

Sir Frederick's skill in this respect, the finish of his touch, and his just sense of the exigencies of plastic art, were, however, unknown to the public, to whom they were first revealed by the appearance of the bronze group the *Athlete Wrestling with a Python*, to which allusion has already been made. The little model for this group promised great things, and by his friends it was believed that the process of deliberate elaboration, necessary to the character of his talent—a process which sometimes leaves its too evident signs upon his painting, would prove less of a hindrance to the direct rendering of his intention in sculpture. The very conditions of expression in the unyielding materials of bronze or marble permit, if they do not demand, an amount of self-conscious intention which always seems to interfere with perfection of expression in painting. But it is dangerous to theorize! One thing only is certain, that is, that the execution of the *Athlete* conveys an impression of frankness and directness which in work so highly wrought is a proof of considerable power. We are, perhaps,



inclined, at present, to attach even too great importance to that air of freedom which often makes the first sketch, the first project, a thing full of delightful promise to the eye : it is no doubt a precious quality, but it disappears most frequently from the work of the man who is honestly intent on doing his best ; it disappears, because on the complete realization of the suggestions of the first conception he has expended his whole energies, and his whole energies have hardly sufficed to the task. That which is done with effort cannot be done with ease. But because the noblest effort must often fall short of perfect accomplishment, shall we therefore ask those who work for us to give us only those slight things which they can do without fatigue ?

The better part of at least two years was devoted by Sir Frederick to carrying out the full-sized model from which the bronze, now in the possession of the Royal Academy (it is at present exhibited at the South Kensington Museum), was cast. The progress of the work had been seriously retarded. The model was not only built up, but had received the labour of many months — the modelling of the torso, for instance, was a thing complete — when it became evident that there had been a miscalculation, and that to render an effect of size corresponding to that which distinguished the terra-cotta sketch, recourse must be had to proportions more considerable than those which had been employed. No sooner was this perceived than the half-completed work was courageously destroyed ; the group was begun again from the beginning, and carried through with undiminished energy on its present scale.

The same steadfast determination to succeed seems, indeed, to be the distinguishing mark of Sir Frederick's talent and character. No matter what may be the matter in hand, he applies himself to achieve success with the same nervous and resolute energy : the same ambition inspires him with like zeal in the performance of that which is great or small, and he will bring to the discharge of his office, as Colonel of Volunteers, or as President of the Royal Academy, an attention equally punctilious and exact.

Sincerely as the Academy may be congratulated on having chosen so honourable a chief, it must at the same time be avowed that their President in no wise represents the tendencies of that body, nor those of English artists in general. The President certainly cannot be reckoned either amongst our painters of historical anecdote, or amongst those who devote themselves to the chronicles of domestic life ; — the two groups with which the name of English Art is still identified upon the Continent. In early days he was a disinterested spectator of the pre-Raphaelite movement ; the original line of which — with its "harmonies of perroquet" — is only continued by one or two of its former leaders : and although the nature of its influence has acquired a more artistic character (due in great measure to the genius of Mr. Burne Jones), Sir Frederick, whilst feeling the most sincere admiration for the rare qualities which the work of this master displays, cannot but suspect that the movement, even in its present shape, is not likely to give birth to a strong and living school. Nor, indeed, are such high hopes as these shared by its leading representatives ; they are themselves aware that their work is destined, probably, to remain sterile ; they are aware that its character and aim is, on the whole, out of sympathy with the main currents of the life of to-day, and they know that,

Nature brings not back the mastodon  
Nor we those times.

On the other hand, although repelled by what he feels to be the artistic incompleteness of the so-called "modern" movement, the spirit in which the President works is thoroughly modern ; — even in his treatment of Greek subject there pierces the specially modern intention of imparting human interest to classical aspects of pictorial art ; and in spite of the foreign training with which we have sometimes been graceless enough to reproach him, he retains sufficiently unmistakable signs of his true nationality. Not only do his portraits, as for instance that of the present Duchess of St. Albans (1874), often shew that intimate possession of the sentiment and character of the subject which betrays the sympathy of common race, but his habitual choice of type is thoroughly national. Whether we turn to the singing maidens of the *Daphnephoria*, or to the damsels of romance, who broider busily in the *Arts of War*, we find ourselves in either case face to face with girls of English birth.

His scientific method and habits of work stand certainly in essential contrast to the unscientific method and habits of work which prevail amongst us. But, let it be granted that the points which constitute the strength of Sir Frederick Leighton's character and talent are precisely those which do not distinguish the popular

English character and talent, it must at the same time be conceded that wherein lies his strength, there lies our weakness, and that he is therefore specially fitted to exercise a useful influence upon our native school. We may justly expect that the example of the high standard of learning and performance, which he persistently maintains, rendered acceptable by his faithful devotion to the best interests of his profession, and backed by the evident authority of his present position, may do much to correct the special failings of English art.

English art has always rejected discipline, and lacked elevation of aim. Its apologists have appealed in justification to its independent and original character, they have taxed with tameness and servility the work of those who, like Sir Frederick Leighton, accept as their inheritance the learning of all the schools, who prepare to work in the full light of past tradition, and who with cool premeditation essay to draw all that lies within their reach into the service of aims which stop short of nothing but perfection. It is true that work thus prepared cannot have that liveliness of movement, that spontaneity of air, or that fever heat which may come to us from a nature less absolutely held in check. Sir Frederick never suffers himself to lose sight of his fixed purpose. Intensely nervous and of a highly strung organization, the alternate excitements of hope and despair are felt but to be met by sterner self-control, — the man is therefore never lost in his work, the work is a part of himself. We must look at it in the spirit in which it is done, for that which it has, and not for that which it has not. The capacity for universal accomplishment, if it is in itself a bar to pre-eminence in any one special point, is in itself a pre-eminence.

EMILIA F. S. PATTISON.



HOLLAND HOUSE, LONDON

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JOHN EVERETT MILLAIS, R.A.







OPHELIA

## JOHN EVERETT MILLAIS, R.A.



IN the royal suburb of Kensington, at the end of Palace Gate — one of those beautiful and quiet streets blessed with air and verdure, smiling with gardens and sunshine, where porticoed houses display an architecture that is at once plain, vigorous and imposing, dwells Mr. Millais, the most celebrated and admired of English painters, and one of the great artists of our century.

The moment that one sets foot in the spacious hall adorned with columns and shining with the soft lustre of marble, with its noble staircase, the balusters of which were designed by the master of the house, one is met by a burst of radiance, and becomes suddenly conscious of a feeling of serenity and calm. This impression of light of a tender and joyous kind increases as you penetrate further into the dwelling, which is nevertheless built for strength and usefulness, with that attention to detail, which suggests the serious mind. The music of fresh young girlish voices is heard, carrying with it the conviction that this home so luminous with the light of day, and telling of content and intelligence, must be a happy one, whatever moments there may be of private care.

The painter, in his morning coat and grey waistcoat, receives us *à bras ouverts*, as we say in France. He is a noble type of the English race; tall and handsome, breathing loyalty, benevolence, intellect and vivacity. His lofty forehead and his deep blue eyes, his mouth with its quick and expressive movements and slight thinness of lips denoting the presence of will, and cheeks full coloured with a play of charming smiles, make up the picture of a man whose life must be as luminous as the house he lives in. Evidently intended

by Nature to be the delight of women and children, he attracts them to him, and possesses a rare capacity for understanding them. On every feature is written sensibility, a lofty goodness, warm human sentiment, and an elevated soul. That ardour and beauty so peculiar in certain English faces and which Mr. Millais knows so well how to depict, are forcibly apparent to me in the artist himself. This is especially observable in the eye, where all the concentrated being and hidden fire of the man burst forth. Such a temperament must contain the elements of storms, but the life led by the painter has kept them down. Yet the touch of sorrow would show itself quickly in the lines of that face; even now the corners of the mouth betray marks which would deepen quickly and prematurely at the slightest stroke of grief, and remain indelibly. In Mr. Millais we have the *beau idéal* of an Englishman; that nature of the physical and moral hero such as novelists like Thackeray and Dickens, and especially female authors like Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot and Mrs. Gaskell, loved to portray; characters endowed with strong and manly energies and consequent protective power, at once resolute and gentle, full of tender sentiments and love of simplicity and goodness. If I have dwelt a little long on the portrait it is because I find it reflecting the qualities of the painter's work.

On the first landing of the staircase is a fountain composed of a white marble basin, from which a seal rises holding a fish in its mouth. This is another of Mr. Millais' designs, and the work itself is from the chisel of Mr. Boehm, the eminent sculptor. The painter may almost be said to have built his own house, for he also planned out its doors and wainscotings and carvings. He even selected the various kinds of wood employed for these purposes — and in England what a choice one has among the beautiful varieties of native wood? His sincere and sober genius is reflected in his studio, just as it is in the other rooms; the eye at once recognises in his house, light, substantiality and dignity; everything excellently ordered throughout for the eye, the brain, the working faculties: in short, for all the comforts of life, perfectly harmonized with modern requirements and tastes. No Orientalism, no bric-a-brac belonging to a bygone age clashes with contemporary thought and custom, or fatigues the sight with its incongruous presence. Terra-cotta bas-reliefs of great beauty, which Mr. Millais bought in Italy, a large-sized bust of the Princess of Wales, an admirable marble statue obtained in Florence, are almost the only examples of foreign art to be met with in the house. There is, however, a portrait of the painter by Mr. Watts, but the walls are chiefly hung with his own drawings, engravings of his pictures, or his children's portraits painted by himself.

Very little furniture is to be found in the studio, which is of vast dimensions. A sofa, some armchairs, a table, several easels, displaying finished or partly finished canvases — some arranged so as to receive the light let in from the window and others pushed back into dark corners — are the principal objects in the room. A rich decorative effect is, however, lent to the apartment by rows of carved wooden pilasters rising from plinths to correspond, as high as the ceiling cornices, thus dividing the walls into so many panels. These recesses are painted a warm brown colour, and in some cases draped with tapestries only half visible in the shadow. But the massive white marble chimney-piece and the floor have the full light of day upon them and shine like crystal in the bright rays that stream through the gigantic "north-light" in the centre of the room. The spaciousness of the apartment and the perfection of all arrangements produce a sense of freedom and repose in the mind that it is not easy to describe.

Turning my attention more particularly to the canvases mounted on easels, I observe the portrait of Mr. Carlyle, and am forcibly reminded of Mr. Boehm's statue of the Sage at the Paris Exhibition.

Rough, rugged-faced, strange Carlyle! His strongly marked features present a curious combination of the gloominess of the madman, the uncouthness of one of Velasquez' beggars, a certain plebeian hardness and a nervous aristocratic refinement. A little further off is the portrait of Mrs. Langtry, the new English beauty who has given rise to as much contention and wrangling among artists as Mrs. Siddons in her day. A childlike artlessness of expression, with ruddy complexion and high cheek-bones, the face is one that suggests vigour and animation. So high however are the shoulders that they may be said to form a straight line, while the contour of the narrow chest invites the comparison of a bread-basket. Such is the picture of Mrs. Langtry. Another female portrait — viz., that of a lady whose arrival at the studio every morning at eleven is a signal for our departure and the work of the day to commence — occupies an easel hard by. Facing it is a finished picture representing the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Charles I., just about to write a supplicating letter on behalf of her father. One of the artist's daughters sat as the model for this figure; but I shall have more to say on this subject hereafter.



Presently a daughter of Mr. Millais enters the studio—not the one just referred to, but the young lady who took the central place in the superb group of the *Three Sisters*, sent to Paris in 1878. Her likeness to her father is very marked. They are capital companions, full of life and fun. Addressing me she said: "Of



A RUINED DEVOTEE OF THE TURF.

Fac-simile of the original drawing.

course you are going to write plenty of wicked things about him;" and turning to her father added: "You see what it is to be a great man."

One day, when I was in the artist's studio, his latest model was brought in, a charming little girl of five years, wearing the costume of a child of the beginning of the present century. She was dressed all in white, with one of those large bonnets styled in France "*Charlotte Corday*," and a pink bow in it, with black mittens, rose-coloured shoes, and a beautiful sash of the same colour.

The portrait of this fascinating little creature is one of the most wonderful productions of Mr. Millais' pencil. She is seated on the trunk of a fallen tree with her small hands crossed in her lap and the toes of her little feet turned in. The clear whiteness, the simplicity and delightful freshness of the picture are beyond description. It is a work of love and joy, reminding me of the song of the nightingale. In contemplating it I could not help exclaiming: "This man is a born painter, just as much as Mozart was a born musician. He was born, so to speak, in his art, which to him is an element especially adapted to his existence and the play of his faculties."

[To what extraordinary species of monkey does the great philosopher and naturalist Darwin ascribe the origin of artists? By what successive transformations and evolutions can he explain the existence of such beings?]

Mr. Millais was good enough to show me some of his drawings, etchings, and sketches. The walls of the



THE DEATH OF THE CONSUMPTIVE

Fac-simile of the original drawing

lower dining-room are almost entirely covered with engravings of his pictures, the most successful being those executed by Mr. Cousins and Mr. Barlow,—the last-mentioned engraver having just completed his plate of *Effie Deans*, one of the latest canvases that have left Mr. Millais' studio. Intermixed however with these engravings are some of the artist's own drawings.

My attention was again drawn to his portrait by Mr. Watts,—the artist is represented younger than he is now, and is surprised as it were under the influence of some impression; there is a keen and penetrating expression on the features which years have replaced by one of greater repose. In the same room are portraits of his two sons, the younger of whom he lost in 1878 at Perth, painted in his boldest manner, and also those of his daughters, whose brilliant colouring recalls the group of the *Three Sisters*. I was much struck by the variety of execution exhibited in his drawings, as well as by their freedom and a certain individuality and creative power, not to be acquired by any artificial process, but which shows itself in greater or less degree according to the impressions of the artist. My eyes fell upon one of his youthful sketches, pregnant with character, one



of those things, indeed, which can only be produced by a soul powerfully influenced by its sensations. It represents the death of one of his friends, a consumptive, who is seen at the point of expiring seated in an armchair and surrounded by members of his family. There is something terrible in its simplicity and strength, in the sorrowful attitudes and gestures, the convulsive movements, and the gradual collapse of the faculties expressed on the dying face. The work is full of the intensest feeling.

Over this picture is one couched in the satiric vein — *A Ruined Devotee of the Turf*, seated in a carriage. The subject has been treated in a dashing, masterly manner, with bold sweeps of the pen. By its side is a curious scene, whose drawing is in the style that is marked by the strong contrast of broad lights, and sharp shadows in the contours of the figures — a method that imparts to the latter great force and energy and an almost rude simplicity. The subject of the sketch is a wife who, accompanied by her children, has come



THE WIFE'S APPEAL.  
Fac-simile of the original drawing

to tear a husband away from his mistress. Here we see that perfect knowledge of life and its sentiments so peculiar to the artist, who almost invariably seizes the moment when the passions of the soul are about to reach their climax in a great explosion. The man is represented with an air of stupefaction, his hands thrust into his pockets, his mind overwhelmed by the sense of a life spoilt and undone, yet betraying an unworthy surprise mingled with sorrow for his mistress who might be pained by parting from him. The wife and children throwing themselves at the man's feet make up a group that bears the impress of a master's art. The whole bespeaks originality and truth. A little further and we behold a drawing-room scene, in which everyone is listening to a recitation. The hearers hang on the words of the speaker; and here again the attitudes, gestures and expressions are those of a creative genius who has looked deeply into, and felt with, Nature. With a rapid glance in passing on I notice a fireman who has just saved some children from the flames and is in the act of handing them to the mother; also *The Eve of St. Agnes*, heroes of chivalry and the ladies for whom they are ready to die; women out walking, and some cockneys sitting on a railing. Among the etchings is a woman on the point of drowning herself, recalling Hood's pathetic poem. I was next struck by some large drawings on



the wall, of women engaged in sewing, with a serious and honest expression of application and practical sense. It is a mirror of life under all its aspects—tranquil, exalted, dramatic, domestic and legendary, the whole depicted in the freest and boldest manner. The English home holds a prominent place in this series of drawings, and, as in the case of Hogarth's works, is portrayed with a strict regard for accuracy of detail.

The terrible energy displayed by Hogarth is sometimes reflected by Mr. Millais. Thus we see the characteristics of race continually asserting themselves and exercising the same influence on painters' minds. Among the most interesting of the drawings is that of the Holy Family in the famous *Carpenter's shop*. Mr. Millais has succeeded in harmonizing the subject with the simple thoughts of that early age. It shows a real capacity for grasping the Christian spirit to have thus placed God in intimate communication with mortals. All races who cling tenaciously to religious principles, beginning with those who have left the earliest records on the earth—viz., the Hindoos, the Egyptians and the Greeks,—prove, by the pious legends they have left, that they were incapable of conceiving this relationship in any other sense. God is always made apparent in the human form, and men have derived great consolation from thus seeing the divinity identified with their own existence. By being liable to the sufferings of humanity the ancient Gods showed themselves more compassionate, fraternal and neighbourly. Jesus as man, a carpenter and a

fisherman, assumes more the character of a friend, and seems to understand us better than the Father in the midst of his golden splendour, seated with the severe aspect of a judge on his dazzling cloud-throne, and surrounded by his angelic and saintly court. Behold then this infant Christ, an apprentice in the house of his father the carpenter. During his occupation he has received an injury, and his little companion, John the Baptist, his Virgin Mother and Martha, all hasten to his assistance. What mental power there is in this young painter who has imparted to his work so much simplicity and moral beauty; than which nothing could be more in accord with the spirit of the Gospel! This work was afterwards engraved by Herr Grüner, of Dusseldorf.

Mr. Millais also showed me his book-illustrations. In these I recognized by turns the exuberance of gaiety, youth running free and unfettered in the fields, serious meditation, the bold assertion of heroic sentiments, the sigh of love and sorrow; and again, the quick masterly touch embodying form and expression, or shadows dashed in roughly and with powerful effect in a contour as sharply defined as that of a bronze, enveloping with sombre mystery some poetic scene such as *Autumn Leaves*; then the art of snatching from the subject an expression of the terrible, as in the case of the *Plagues of Egypt*, where the wife drags with an ox-like resignation the cart containing the bodies of her children. All this work is carried out with a complete freedom of composition, with a facility combining strength, animation, contempt for all pretty mannerism, the style and execution being always adapted to the subject, and conceived with a boldness approaching Nature. One can easily understand how these illustrations came like a revelation and exercised a great influence upon others. The late Frederick Walker, for example, representing as he does the new artistic school of *Punch* and the *Graphic*, seems to have derived from these drawings of Mr. Millais the inspiration to create a fresh school of wood engraving, just as Herr Menzel has done in Germany.

Mr. Millais has just collaborated in an illustrated edition of Thackeray's works, and once more he has been able to present himself in a new manner. The drawings are delicate, spirited and incisive, reflecting the humour



SKETCH OF MR. MILLAIS,  
BY JOHN LEECH.



SKETCH OF MR. MILLAIS (JUNIOR), BY JOHN LEECH.

of the writer. Not only has he illustrated works on a large scale, such as the Bible, the Parables of our Lord, and Tennyson's poems, but has associated himself in this manner with various publications, and has derived a real pleasure from illustrating children's books, such as *Papers for Thoughtful Girls*, and *Stories from Girls' Lives*. His illustrations of some ten years back are those upon which he now sets the greatest value. For my own part, I perceive in all, without exception, a certain grandeur and mystery mingling with the simplicity of Nature; while life, as depicted by his hand, is so rich in characteristic features that it may be said to blossom with them and to dazzle by this sense of plenitude. The practice of illustrating books must exercise I should think a most stimulating influence on the inventive and observing faculties. To obtain possession of Mr. Millais' memoirs, the history of his life, thoughts, and works, nothing more is needed than to turn over the leaves which contain his sketches. All that Nature has made him feel he has noted down in that frank, simple, and lifelike manner that reminds me also of the spirit that animated Turner. The country,



FIG. SIMILAR FROM THE ARTIST'S SKETCH BOOK

the town, the sea, people, animals, boats, flowers, daily occupations and amusements, are all reflected here. Flowers we have, drawn with sufficient taste and discernment of the effect of colour to excite the jealousy of Japanese artists: and here can be detected a connecting link with that sentiment which has so often engaged his efforts in the portraiture of women and young girls. Now we behold staircases, with their windings and depths filled with hovering shadows and that inexpressible something which imparts to a staircase that character of the wonderful and enigmatical which finds its full expression in *The Princes in the Tower*; then we have windows, those agents of light which must necessarily strike the artist's eye in a peculiar manner; now houses and streets, men on horseback, children — many children — the delight of life. Here is a small sketch of Leech; there we see two stags' heads studied with an amount of care that may be termed devotion, — the animals to which they belonged having been killed by Mr. Millais. And here I may remark, in passing, that the subject of this sketch is a great sportsman and angler.

Returning to his drawings, a little further on we come to the *Harvesters*; now we stop at a study that has been ten times repeated, it is that of a man carrying a lamb on his shoulders, which has served for his picture of *The Good Shepherd of the Parables*. In another place we perceive in a few lines the original idea of his *Chill*

*October*; then studies of women in various attitudes, sketches of hands — those hands which have absorbed so much of the attention of English artists, and in the delineation of which they have often achieved such triumphs. I can only enumerate a few of these in which the sum of life in its best and most expressive aspect is revealed, though each may have been as rapidly done as the drawing of a bird on the wing.

But I visited the artist in the character of an examining counsel or a sheriff to question and worry him until he made a confession of his faults — we therefore entered into conversation. Already, when looking at his Florentine statue, I had been struck by the glossy golden surface which time had given it. "That is not *sugar*," observed the painter — a simple remark that greatly pleased me, for I have a horror of marble which when it does not resemble sugar looks like soap.

Mr. Millais acquired his art and his profession at the Royal Academy, where he commenced his studies when almost a child. The education to be obtained at the Academy at that period was ample, but greatly inferior in resources and variety to that which the institution offers at the present day. It was the same everywhere. Forty years ago no one had any idea of the mass of books, casts, photographs, engravings, copies, and documents of all kinds now placed at our disposal, any more than of the new notions that have become mingled with Art as with everything else. The works of the early Italians, such as Botticelli, the Campo Santo of Pisa, and the churches of Florence, were the subjects in which Mr. Millais took most delight during his youth. They have indeed exercised the greatest influence upon the best English artists of the day.

No teacher directed Mr. Millais, nor could have done so. He was born with an independent, even radical turn of mind, and with marked individuality. In fact, from the period when he began to illustrate and to paint, English art experienced a new life, and a complete liberty of conception and composition became infused into it. To find characters presenting analogical features to his own I must look in the direction of English novelists and here I perceive the same strong emotional intellect, the same scrupulous regard to detail, the same ambition enamoured of truth and reaching to religion, struggling to embody with rare grandeur the noblest, most manly, and tender sentiments.

Besides his numerous illustrations, Mr. Millais in his early youth painted the portraits of actors at ten shillings apiece. His

only sister married an actor, now living in America. Towards the close of the last century a powerful attraction existed between painters and actors. The South Kensington Museum bears testimony to this with its portrait series of celebrated players from Garrick downwards. Moreover it seems to be that the art of decoration in connection with the theatre is better understood in England than elsewhere. Famous scenes are readily represented on the London stage. I have left the Lyceum with enthusiasm after having witnessed the *mise en scène* of the Queen's chamber in *Hamlet*, with its violet lights so delicately reflected on the ceiling. The actress who played the part of Ophelia produced in my mind the effect of a pre-Raphaelite figure. Madlle. Sarah Bernhardt has caused a great stir in the painters' world, and if she had remained in London she would have been to the artists another Siddons.

In contemporary art the influence of Mr. Millais and his work is everywhere apparent. Touching his conceptions and choice of subjects he tells me that he has followed the free movements of his instinct and his inclinations: — to-day all poetical as in the case of *Ophelia*; to-morrow seductive with the floral graces of beautiful young girls, as in *Hearts are Trumps*; yesterday stirred by the contemplation of human goodness as in the case of his old picture in which a venerable horseman is seen in the act of fording a river with a child and young girl whom he has placed on his saddle, a canvas that the public once treated with contempt, but which has now come into favour. Again we find him impressed by the energy and grandeur of characters and exploits belonging to the history of his country, and painting under such influences *The North West Passage*. It is useless however to say more on this head, for his works speak better than any description.



THE QUEEN OF HELENS



We required an art, renewed as it were with expressions appropriate to our state of mind and in sympathy with the general movement, the English public might observe, and what we wanted has been supplied in the paintings of this artist. "Throughout my life," said Mr. Millais, "I have responded to the intellectual call of my countrymen. Natural sentiment guided me and identified me with my own times, and I had the good fortune to realise and reproduce by the medium of design and colour those feelings developed in the nation by the period in which we live." Here we have the clue to that direct communion of sympathy with those writers and modern romancers, men and women, who by their warm human tendencies are at once the glory of England and of the human race.

In the works of Shakespeare and of Sir Walter Scott, and in the Bible, we behold the fountains wherein Mr. Millais has drunk most deeply the spirit of his work. Tennyson also, the pre-Raphaelite of Poetry, Thackeray, that prober of human hearts, and others, have been his friends in art. The narrow and purely mechanical realism which lays claim to the emotions and admiration of the crowd, and which would limit art to the negation of all sentiment and idea, Mr. Millais repudiates. As a reaction against pretentious commonplace and mere artifice, or as supplying young people with an excellent aid to study, such realism has its uses, but when it advances so far as to deny the true objective of art, and to rob the artist himself of all that makes him a sentient being, with a beating heart and thinking brain, it then becomes only worthy of derision.

Like Constable, Mr. Millais possesses the "piety of Nature." To repeat his own words: "The painter ought to go on his knees before Nature as though he were worshipping in a temple. I have seen portraits," he said, "by Rembrandt, Velasquez and Van Dyck, which seemed to breathe this sentiment." It has been the happy lot of the generation of 1845 to share such ideas as these, and it was these that fired Ruskin, the art-philosopher and Tyrtaeus of the new faith which is founded on truth. Realism in this generous and expansive sense will sway the modern world. The art of painting must modify and attune itself to actual life. Henceforth we shall devote ourselves to the simple and the true, casting aside all falsity, all tinsel conventionality, specious glitter and pompous *mise en scène*. All the elaborate "machinery of decorative composition should disappear and give place to modes more in accord with simpler life and ideas that go directly to the human heart. To paint nowadays in the Italian decorative style, *à la Watteau* or *à la Boucher*, is to go counter to the tendencies of society, the requirements of life and all the signs of our epoch."

"Michael Angelo and Raphael, those prodigious forms, blossomed forth like the supreme and crowning glory of the intellectual efforts and peculiar wants of a society that for two centuries had been seeking its definitive mode of expression. But there is no call upon us to imitate them or commence their work anew. What they have done is done once and for ever; it finished with the age that engendered it by an inevitable process."

"Another task devolves upon us. We are journeying on another road. In art as in literature, we are *entering into ourselves*; man is busy probing his nature and thirsting to understand his own being now and for aye. The further we progress, the more it becomes necessary that the painter's art should identify itself with modern life, that it should flow over it and take its impress therefrom as the wet plaster imprints upon itself the likeness of the model, and in such a way obtain its most striking characteristics. Historical painting is a garment with which we can clothe ourselves in certain states of mind. If for instance we perceive in it something which vibrating in the hearts of our fathers is equally present in our own, we may then have recourse to it.



AWALE.

Mr. Millais might have added : — "What I have done is not the mere physical resurrection of a bygone period, but an expression of the human soul. Certain things drawn from our old chronicles and our writers of fiction simply conveyed to me an impression which my own life had already awakened, but had not imparted to it clear and precise form."

"All art is great," he continued, "according to the measure that it is a working art. Some cattle, a bit of thicket, or a handful of flowers may be 'great' in this sense. The strict application of this word 'art' too often shelters an emptiness, and, to use a French term, ends by becoming a *blague*. It is a flag behind which idle minds shelter themselves and is a branch of safety for mediocrity."

It will be easily seen that we did not converse in the didactic style of treatises on painting.

"One of the characteristic features of our art," Mr. Millais went on to observe, "to commence at the



FAC-SIMILE FROM THE ARTIST'S SKETCH-BOOK

root, that is to say towards the close of the eighteenth century, is that we understand and express woman better, and that we steadily progress in this direction — doubtless because we love her more and more. It is since Watteau and Gainsborough that woman has taken her proper place in art. The Greeks felt the grace and majesty of the subject, but after them there came a kind of eclipse. The Dutch, with all their devotion to Nature, had no love for woman. The Italians in this respect were the same as the Dutch. The female portraits by Titian, Raphael, Rembrandt, Van Dyck and Velasquez are admirable as paintings, but who would care to embrace such women. Watteau, Gainsborough and Reynolds were needed to do justice to the charms of woman and reflect all her captivating grace."

Living and dead artists afterwards became a theme of conversation. On some of the dead masters Mr. Millais' opinion has already been given. He is a great admirer of Poussin, although readily acknowledging that he lacks seductive power. "In Velasquez," said he, "we behold perhaps the greatest of all painters." Among modern French artists, Millet, Corot and Daubigny greatly impressed him; while Meissonnier struck him as showing extraordinary ability, and as regards exactitude and precision he thought him superior to any artist he knew. He also holds in high esteem the German painters, instancing among others Menzel and Lenbach; and I was delighted to hear him lay such stress on the merits of two of my most valued friends — M. Degas and M. Fantin la Tour. "In short," he added, "we moderns are not inferior to those who have preceded us. We shall become 'Old Masters' ourselves in our turn and be respected. More than one amongst us will then have as high a reputation as our celebrated predecessors, and will receive as much homage in the Museums as we now pay to the men of the past."

Mr. Millais considers it is the duty of criticism to search in an artist's work for that quality which is distinctive of the painter, whatever degree of development it may attain to. In his own case the sentiment that actuates him throughout the majority of his conceptions is to *leave the drama unfinished*. By following this method his own emotions derive the deepest and fullest satisfaction. The fact testifies to the presence of a profoundly artistic intelligence. By keeping wholly within the simple he produces upon the spectator the effect of a bell that murmurs and vibrates long after it is struck. Thus the story which the artist has purposely left untold, completes itself in the mind of the spectator. Our thoughts are led into certain paths which he has opened to us. As an instance of this, take *The Huguenot*; *The Princes in the Tower*; and those three phases of girlish love represented in the pictures *Yes or No*; *No*; and *Yes*. He has selected as the most delicately expressive and most capable of prolonging the thought of the spectator, the motive of the leave-taking in the picture *Yes*. He allows the mingled sentiments of fidelity, resolution, inquietude, and possibly the sense of peril, to sway the soul of the young girl. Had the lover just returned, the effect would have been commonplace, and would have brusquely ended the matter, failing to impart to the spectator that prolonged sensation inseparable from the present work, and arising from the contemplation of all the accidents which the separation may entail. As Mr. Millais will write his own ideas it is not for me to develop them beyond these few pages. He has been good enough to answer all the questions which I thought fit to put to him, and the object I had at heart was to make him touch upon those points which in my judgment were the most important.

I am now about to relate Mr. Millais' career, but shall be able to tell no more on this head than other biographers. We see before us a vocation manifesting itself in the most absolute manner from childhood, and a subsequent course as triumphant as the flight of an eagle in space. There are difficulties which weigh upon youth, yet what are difficulties after all when we are young? Simply a pleasure; and when they have been undergone, subsequent success makes the recollection of them as pleasant as that of a struggle which ended in victory. Mr. Millais' life has been passed in art, and the painter's works are his history.

John Everett Millais was born on the 8th of June, 1829, at Southampton, and he belongs to one of the oldest of Jersey families. Notwithstanding this origin and the French termination of his name, Mr. Millais is a thorough Englishman. Nevertheless I must confess that I have been struck at times by a certain *tournure* decidedly French which he has given to some of his female figures, as well as by an inexplicable something in his artistic feeling and execution which is neither French nor English but owes its origin equally to both races and gives him a distinctive position among the painters of England. His grandfather followed the profession of the law, and his father was an officer in the Jersey Militia.

Towards 1835 the Millais family removed to Dinan, an ancient and picturesque town of Brittany, and here it was that the child, then six years of age, gave the first decided, and one may say extraordinary, signs of his vocation as a painter. It has been frequently mentioned how the sight of the artillery officers forming part of the French garrison at Dinan, with their plumes, shakos and gold braid, filled the child with a longing to make coloured sketches of them; a wish that he put into practice. Some English officers who happened to



EARLY LANSBORN'S FIRST LOVE  
Fac simile of an original drawing for the Works of  
W. M. Thackeray



be at Dinan seeing these drawings, were quite astonished, and showed them to the French officers. No one could believe that they could have been the work of a boy of six, and a wager was made. The consequence was that the French artillerymen had to pay for a grand dinner, the hero of which was the precocious

artist. This was a triumph for the Millais family, and became for the painter a bright and happy *souvenir* of childhood.

They returned to Jersey about the year 1837, and lastly settled in London, with the object, not unmixed with anxiety, of consulting some of the chief artistic authorities concerning the future of Everett Millais. His mother took him to Sir Martin Archer Shee, then President of the Royal Academy, and painter (among other works), of the beautiful portrait of Lewis the actor—now in the National Gallery. Shee, who so well understood how perilous and hard might be the lot of a painter, exclaimed in the first instance that he would rather make a child a sweep than an artist;—but on examining the drawings that the little boy had brought with him, he did not conceal his surprise or his change of opinion. "The parents and friends of a child so highly endowed as this," said he, "should put forth every exertion in order to facilitate the cultivation of his faculties and to help him on in the career for which Nature has evidently created him."

When nine years old, young Millais was placed with a master, Mr. Sass, and he soon

obtained for a drawing after the antique a medal from the Society of Arts. At eleven years he began to study at the Royal Academy, where never until then had so young a pupil been seen. Two years later he obtained an Academy medal for a drawing after the antique. After this he steadily continued to carry off medals in each category of his studies.

He had not reached his fifteenth year when he began painting; and at an age when one has not generally reached a serious stage of existence, he was gaining his living, for he had not long to wait for opportunities of painting portraits paid for at the rate of three to five pounds each. Before he was sixteen, his ability as a painter obtained for him a gold medal.

In 1846 he and his friend Mr. Holman Hunt exhibited their first canvases. Mr. Millais sent to the Academy his picture *Pizzaro Seizing the Inca of Peru*, which now is the property of his half brother, Mr. Hodgkinson. In 1847 he exhibited a painting called *Elgiva*. His canvas representing *The Tribe of Benjamin Carrying off the Daughters of Shiloh*, obtained for him the same year the Gold medal for historical painting. He also painted this year for a mansion at Leeds four panels for an interior: *Childhood*, *Old Age*, *Youth*, and *Manhood*. At this early period—so quick to pass, when hope and expectation with eyes always fixed on the future, take no notice of the present—the young man did not earn more than £120 to £130 a year.

Mr. Millais was about twenty years of age when he joined the pre-Raphaelites. This famous name, inseparable from the history of contemporary art, was in the first instance invented as a lively jest by Mr. Rossetti, poet and painter, to denote the tendencies, ideas and aims of a certain group among whom were Mr. Holman Hunt and himself. The word was caught up and inscribed on their banner, and the work which they produced

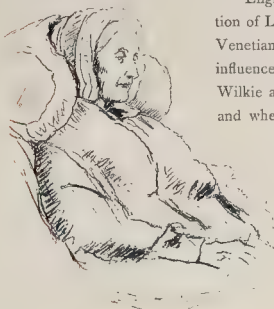


THE LAST DAYS OF BARRY LYNDON.  
Fac-simile of an original drawing for the Works of  
W. M. Thackeray.



THE INCA OF PERU.

soon brought fresh recruits to their body, of whom the most powerful, and the one who cast the most lustre on the new school was Mr. Millais. Holman Hunt, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Madox Brown, Martineau, Burne Jones, William Morris, Arthur Hughes and Millais were the principal adepts of this school.



Fac-simil. from the artist's sketch-book.

English painting was at the time of which I am speaking a feeble reflection of Lawrence and Wilkie, and was assuming the character of degenerate Venetian or Dutch art. If we in France experienced in 1820 the salutary influence of the English school, the latter afterwards, through the medium of Wilkie and Lawrence, received the *choc en retour* from our romantic style, and when the pre-Raphaelites appeared on the scene, there existed a dire confusion of false and sickly romanesque elements, while commonplace Dutch *bourgeoisisme*, mannerism, affectation, harsh and hollow colouring, threatened the very existence of art in England.

The young men aimed at a complete reaction in the direction of truth and severity. Ideal realists, as they have been termed, they invoked the clear and vigorous "conscience" of the Fifteenth-century painters. The time for sincere and loyal work had now come. A journal called *The Germ* was established in 1850 to represent and assist the new school, but it soon lapsed. Mr. Ruskin came to the rescue. The greatest and most enthusiastic of art-writers had already published his *Studies of Turner*; and his *Stones of Venice*. He naturally belonged to the order of pre-Raphaelite ideas, and his fiery pen was an important accession of strength to the school.

It is curious to observe how these ideas at this period were "in the air" all over Europe, and that the reaction in the cause of truth and simplicity occurred simultaneously in Germany, under the impulsion of Herr Menzel at Berlin and of some Dusseldorf artists; in England with the pre-Raphaelite movement, and in France through the influence of the Realists, among whom the present writer was the first who endeavoured to inculcate the new doctrine. Observe also that this general movement took place in the complete absence of any understanding on the subject between the three countries, and in fact without either of them being cognisant of the change that was working in foreign schools.

The first pre-Raphaelite work that we owe to Mr. Millais was *Isabel*; then came *The Carpenter's Workshop* (of which I shall say more further on); exhibited in 1850. Then followed in 1851 *The Woodman's Daughter*; which is also a marvellous piece of landscape painting, *Mariana*; after Tennyson's poem, and *The Return of the Dove to the Ark*; with those famous bits of straw that surprised us so in France at the Universal Exhibition of 1855. In 1852, *The Huguenot*; shown at the Academy met with a striking success. Mr. Millais' reputation dates from this work.

It was bought for £150, but the artist received his money only by small instalments; subsequently, however, the owner, having sold the picture to great advantage, added £50 to his original payment. It is estimated at the present time that this work is worth £5,000. *Ophelia* was likewise painted in 1852. The year 1853 witnessed the appearance of *The Order of Release* and *The Proscribed Royalist*. The painter now threw off that



THE INTERCEPTED LETTERS.

Fac-simil. of an original drawing for the works of W. M. Thackeray.

austere regard for minutiae the pre-Raphaelite fraternity had imposed upon him for the space of three years.

Mr. Millais having reached his twenty-fourth year was admitted Associate of the Royal Academy — that is to say, immediately that his age rendered him eligible for the honour; and on the 3rd of July 1854, he married Euphemia Chalmers, eldest daughter of George Gray Esq., of Bowerswell, Co., Perth, by whom he has had nine children.

In 1855 he painted *The Rescue*, and in the following year *Autumn Leaves*, wherein he gave fresh evidence of power and originality as a landscape painter. The group of young girls in this drawing exhibits decided pre-Raphaelitism, but the colouring bespeaks the freedom, brilliancy, rich and supple manipulation which distinguish the new and grand phase which the artist's talent had now entered. The grace of the figures recalls what M. Jules Breton has endeavoured to do for our peasant women in France; but in the English painter's work there is an amount of force, breadth, and originality to which M. Breton has never attained.

Pictures devoted to the study of child-life succeeded those already enumerated. After these came *The Heretic* in 1857, *Spring Flowers* in 1859, *The Black Brunswicker* in 1860, *My First Sermon*; and *The Eve of St. Agnes*; in 1863, and *My Second Sermon* in 1864, — the year after Mr. Millais was elected a member of the Royal Academy, and in which he also painted *Charley is my Darling*; *Foan of Arc*; *The*



CHILDHOOD

Fac-simile of the original drawing.

*Romans leaving Britain*; and *Satan Sowing the Tares*; are dated 1865. *Sleeping*; *Waking*; and *Jephthah*; belong to the year 1867. Under the title of *A Souvenir of Velasquez*, Mr. Millais painted in 1868 his diploma picture. Then came the following list of subjects: — *The Gambler's Wife* (1869); *The Widow's Mite*; and *The Boyhood of Sir Walter Raleigh* (1870); *Victory, O Lord! Chill October*; *Yes or No* (1871); *Hearts are Trumps* (1872); *Lalla Rookh* (1873); *The Picture of Health*; *Scotch Firs*; *Winter Fuel*; *The North-West Passage* — all in 1874.

In 1875 the artist exhibited *The Fringe of the Moor*; *The Crown of Love* (after George Meredith); *No*; *The Deserted Garden* (after Campbell's poem); in 1876, *Forbidden Fruit*; *Over the Hills and far away*; the landscape sent to the Universal Exhibition, and *Getting Better*; in 1877, *The Yeoman of the Guard*; the landscape *The Sound of many Waters*; *Yes*; and in 1878, *The Princes in the Tower*; *The Bride of Lammermoor* (which did not appear in the Academy); and *St. Martin's Summer*; — landscape.

Mr. Millais also painted the following: — *The White Cockade* (1861); *Awake*; and *The Minuet* (1867); *The Three Sisters*; *Effie Deans*; *Rosalind*; and *Stella* (1868); *Vanessa* (1869); *New Laid Eggs* (1873); *Still for a Moment* (1874).

The artist has produced, in addition to the foregoing works, a large number of portraits, among which may be mentioned those of *Sir W. Sterndale Bennett*, the composer; *Sir James Paget*, the celebrated surgeon; the *Duke and Duchess of Westminster*; his own daughters; *Mrs. Bischoffsheim*; the *Earl of Shaftesbury K.G.*; *Mr. Gladstone*; and *Mrs. Kennard*. As it is not my intention to prepare a complete catalogue of Mr. Millais' works I shall not attempt to enumerate all his portraits; but here I feel bound to express regret and even



indignation at the narrow spirit that prevails among the greater number of those who are in possession of Mr. Millais' works. They refuse to allow them to be reproduced either by engraving or photography. Is it thus that the love of art is exemplified? A mere handful of individuals are able to prevent the English people as well as other nationalities and posterity from becoming familiar with a great artist's work! It is well that this fact should be made known, and that the public should have an opportunity of forming an opinion of such vulgar selfishness.

And now I call to mind the deep impression made at the Exhibition of 1855 by the three youthful works which Mr. Millais sent there. The devoted fidelity to detail so much extolled by Mr. Ruskin, who would carry the homage due to the Divine work even to a pebble and a blade of grass, took us completely by surprise. The figures, so wonderfully true to Nature, the beauty of tone, the rigorous exactitude of drawing and general intensity, appeared to us to be of altogether exceptional merit. Every detail was clearly and sharply defined. The dress, the coat, even a buckle or a button, a bit of stone, or straw, or a leaf — all stood out from the canvas and showed the same minute and perfect finish. Nevertheless the faces and the hands showed a singular boldness of colouring, and successfully subordinated the less important parts of the picture. The effect was crude and hard, but the eye became fascinated and lent itself to the illusion.



OLD AGE

Fac-simile of the original drawing

All this was new or renewed by a return of the old spirit of sincerity: yet whether it be in the limpid water-colour tints or the velvety touch of the pastel, which since the end of the eighteenth century have formed the texture and essence of English painting, and may be attributed either to a practice transmitted from studio to studio or to some special quality belonging to the colours employed, or to some taste peculiar to the race, a distinct connection with those predecessors in art — Etty, Mulready, Wilkie and Leslie — was to be recognised in Mr. Millais' work. The broad, masterly manner — easy, rich, supple, sparkling and harmonious — the artist had not yet acquired. It may indeed be said that whereas he was ruled by others at that early period, subsequently others have been influenced by him.

The singular *naïveté* of the *Return of the Dove to the Ark*, the wonderful poem of woman, flowers, and water represented by *Ophelia*, the marvellous relief of *The Order of Release*, contain a suggestiveness of old painted glass; only, in place of the Dutch and Italian *bourgeois* of Van Eyck, Memling and Gozzoli, imagine men and women of our own time.

The dryness of those parts where the light falls, a manipulation still a little laboured, the drawing done by a hand somewhat fearful of itself, the local colour, rich to excess, and put on without sufficient care to maintain harmony with neighbouring tones — all these signs spoke of a juvenile art, full of freshness, *outré*, unyielding in its principles, voluntarily encumbering itself with obstacles and austerities, a sort of fasting full of inner rebellion, trembling under the sentiment of liberty, but taking to itself a penitential sack.

At the Universal Exhibition of 1867, Mr. Millais reappeared before us with *The Romans leaving Britain*, which failed to make an impression. In *Satan Sowing the Tares*, and *The Eve of St. Agnes*,

we have pre-Raphaelitism still, at least, so it appears to us, but "pre-Raphaelitism delivered." A warmth and harmony at first unknown to the style, were now supplied to it by Mr. Millais. The colouring was as powerful as formerly, but better contained and distributed; there was a better balance, too, in the arrangement of lights and shadows, the pure tones had a freer play and were well mingled, and the outlines were less sharply defined. A magical grace and charm had made itself apparent in the artist's work. Satan passed like a sombre apparition across the ensanguined rays of the sun, but the beautiful young girl was especially remarked in her white *dishabillé*, carrying herself with such nobleness and chastity in the pale blue moonlight. This *Eve of St. Agnes* is *par excellence* a poetic and artistic work. It reminds us of our own Delacroix and of Rembrandt, by its bold and broad treatment, and the beauty of its white transparent shadows graduating into complete darkness, without losing the impression of air and space. And what could be more fearless, more pregnant with inventive power, than that moonlight bathing the white-clad form of the girl whose movements are so simple and gentle, and tracing out on the floor, in silver-blue light, the shape of the entire window with its bars! A work of love, poetry and music!

Finally, at the Exhibition of 1878, the artist appeared before us once more in a new light—viz., as the perfect master of painting, accompanied by beat of drum and sound of clarion. By his power over light and colour which could make flesh seem liquid in its softness, he appeared as one endowed with the seductive strength of the greatest masters, sitting as a modern brother at the family table of Velasquez, Gainsborough, Rembrandt and Watteau, with a spirit rapid, ample, delicate and powerful like their own, though animated by another spirit and illumined by a new vision.

We now beheld in *The Yeoman of the Guard* an extension and fresh treatment of the idea embodied in *The Order of Release*, the same intensity of tone with much more suppleness and brilliancy, the drawing quite as exact, yet showing greater ease and expansion, the *naïveté* as faithfully preserved, while betraying more self-confidence, and, to summarise, the artist disporting himself—swimming as it were—with infinite delight in his artistic element.

The method displayed all the resources of his talent, exhibiting at a glance each layer of colour, enfolding and defining the form and fixing the lights on the canvas, the unctuous freshness of bright tones, the rounded touches which make the lights and shadows blend in harmonious masses of caressing colour, mutually imbibing each other's tints, the bold "rubbings" combining suppleness and solidity, the transparent glazing, and, above all the grandeur and vigour of the drawing.

Thus we have presented to us the lovely *Gumbler's Wife*, a work of the most bewitching tenderness, and sweetness of tone, produced by any pencil since Gainsborough; and *The Three Sisters*, that triumphant bouquet of flowers, to which nothing to my knowledge can be compared for dazzling freshness of tone and laughing fulness of childish health; then *The North-West Passage*, perfection of clear daylight, truth and simplicity, and elevated sentiment; then a veritable struggle with Nature and her scenery—*Chill October*, in all its beauty of colouring, grey and brown tints mingling in the air under the lash of the north wind, the dun sky filling the soul with melancholy and thoughts as grey as the time; then *Over the Hills and Far Away*, with its rainbow-like depths so fearlessly put in, and its portraits so firm and full of colour.

The light fell in streams over the vast panorama of which Mr. Millais' works formed part—an intellectual as well as material radiance. One became sensible of the presence of a mind that was as the hearth whereon the light which the hand distributed was kindled. To him it is evidently a joy to express himself through his painting; he is no sooner before a canvas than this passion seizes him, and his delight is crowned when he has evoked, from his imagination, a figure, an interior, a rural scene, etc. He seems to have in all he does a song of happiness, or those deep tones of pity and melancholy which a deeply sensitive nature experiences at the suffering with which the world is sown.

Nothing capable of moving another heart or mind is foreign to his own, and every sound of sorrow, equally with every joyous one, finds in him an echo, and is transfused into art wherein his individuality stands wholly reflected. But I shall return to this subject a little later.

Too powerfully endowed by Nature to remain long in the archaic theory of pre-Raphaelitism, step by step he disentangled himself from it as from the meshes of a net. He needed more varied experience, and greater play for his limbs.

It was a rigorous school of execution that allowed nothing to be evaded, nothing sacrificed, which

compelled the artist to look and to learn; but in the long run of life the painter finds that he has one impression to-day and another to-morrow, and that no single system will suffice to interpret all, especially an equalizing one, that only attempts to draw from Nature certain dominant impressions, but loses them all in the endeavour to reflect them equally and simultaneously.

When Mr. Millais withdrew from pre-Raphaelitism the movement was doomed. It became transformed and corrupted and the result is an elegant and poetic mannerism, in which is blended the Spirit of the "Decadence" with that of the early schools. This mysticism — sometimes insipid — concentrated itself in an atmosphere of greyish-brown violaceous tone, resembling that of certain Japanese leathers and papers, with English types drawn half *en Florentin* and half in Roman bas-relief. The pre-Raphaelite painting of



THE BOYHOOD OF SIR WALTER RALEIGH

Fac-simile of the original drawing.

Mr. Millais had a strong tendency to throw back the light, whereas this latter style absorbs and extinguishes it with its dull and neutral tonalities, wherein move shadows, phantoms, and recollections of painting, not entities.

Mr. Millais is himself endowed with rare vital force, with the fullest measure of bodily and mental health, with an eye as bright as a mirror turned towards the sky, while his art is candour itself, full of human sympathy and sonorous music. It was easy to perceive that he would escape from the net even while he was still entangled by it. In vain the colouring of *The Rescue* wore the strange and lurid hues of a conflagration, and the forms sought in vain to give themselves an archaic character; I could here discern, as I have already said, the free and sturdy touch of Hogarth. Nature and art are face to face, the former being represented in all the heaviness typified by the dress of the period. The tender sentiment of *The Huguenot* broke down the barriers of pre-Raphaelitism; the latter's spirit already overflowed its banks in *The Order of Release*, and the



deep feelings which a landscape evokes in us had freely pierced its obstacles in *Autumn Leaves*. The delivered principle could be detected in each.

The practice of illustrating was also for Mr. Millais a school for observation and the study of truths. It was here he perceived that the spiritual and material tendencies of the fifteenth century were inconsistent with those of our own time, and that we ought to have our own aspects and characteristics without being obliged to borrow anything from the primitives, excepting their honesty. In his feminine types, the painter, while helping to accentuate the somewhat strange and fantastic character of certain English faces — angular, with high cheekbones, the eyes resembling lamps set at the bottom of a cavern — always gave them the smile of life, made them capable of showing a sustained emotion, a charm of inner sentiment, and, I may add, of modern romance.

Hitherto, however, I have only spoken of his evolution in relation to purely pictorial and artistic sensations, it is necessary also to notice, if only by a few rapid glances, the thoughts and sentiments of the man. I have already indicated the sustained idea of the drama, in the expression of that "just-enough" which denotes the supreme artistic comprehension, but for it to be appreciated almost equally high faculties are needed in the spectator. To the true artist, the drama boiling over with turbid passion, only brings disgust and fatigue. It is in that which lightens and relieves the plot that we must seek for true beauty, creative power and depth of sentiment.

I know no artist who has expressed ideas so vividly by means of simple attitudes and gestures as Mr. Millais. What could be more marvellous in this respect than the conception of *The Huguenot* and *The Black Brunswicker*, those two mute and almost motionless dramas? Anguish depicted on the faces and in the eyes of the women, a masculine yet sad tenderness and resolution on the faces of the men, nothing more! *There* she is twining around him the scarf that might seemingly hold him back and save him, and she tightens it with all her strength. How ardently she desires and prays God that he may not be denounced! A perfect soul is contained in this admirable movement. *Here*, the struggle is wrapped in silence, she strives with a last and feeble effort — an effort that is her final prayer, her timid but supreme supplication; one hand holding the door which he is in the act of opening in order to depart; the other, resting on the breast of the man she loves, endeavours to restrain him; and all the while she knows quite well that the imperious call of duty must be obeyed — yet the thought is so natural, so sweet, human and delicate! One instinctively feels in the presence of noble and courageous and, at the same time, resolute spirits.

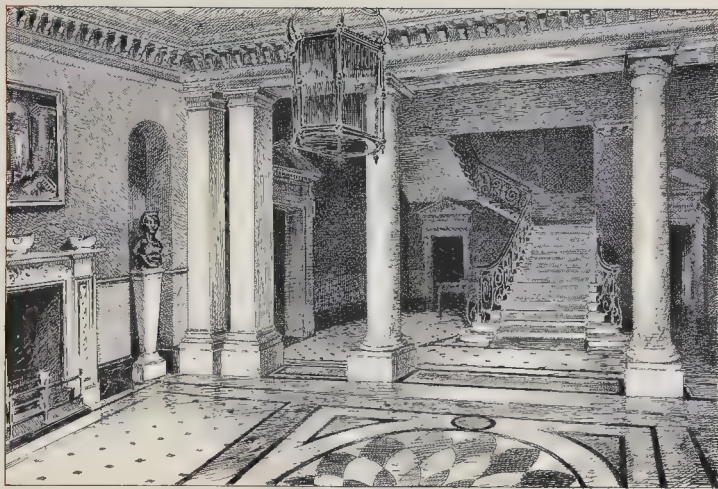
In Mr. Millais is to be recognised a great master of gesture, a man who can show that Nature is ever new and full of unexpected beauty, and how inexhaustible is simplicity in the forms originally traced out. It is unquestionably true that throughout the history of painting and sculpture nothing is of rarer occurrence than an artist endowed with this talent of interpreting gesture, who, discarding all commonplace conventionalities strives to represent moral beauty and to render the impressions of the individual by this simple method of expression. There are not perhaps twenty artists in the whole range of sculpture and painting of whom one may say: — "These have studied man in all his modes of expression, they understand the eloquent and infinite language of his movements, the gestures of his hands, limbs, and entire body." Truly man still withholds some great secrets from the majority of artists, even from the most famous among them — secrets which it has only been given to certain highly privileged and superior beings to fathom.

Moreover, I do not believe that any other painter has loved women and children and read their nature like Mr. Millais. Reynolds and Romney have depicted children with a delightful art. Gainsborough has celebrated women in the smiling and triumphant tranquillity of their beauty and adornments, painting them in all their pomp. But Mr. Millais has gone farther; he has penetrated into their souls, and there discovered greater beauties even than the brilliant exterior could present. He has prosecuted this method without ceasing to be a painter, being equally sensible of the floral bloom and freshness of health, of youth and luxury, as of the mysterious charm of sentiments.

Take for example the child in *Awake*, gazing with eyes wide-opened, and with a contemplative expression of blended prayer and astonishment, upon the great world that lies before it — the marvellous realm of life. I am not aware that, before Mr. Millais, this *riverie* of childhood has ever been expressed in art. Nor do I perceive anything analogous to his picture of the children in his *Sir Walter Raleigh*, listening with avidity to the sailor's stories, and choosing without any misgiving their future career. Before him, children were only

understood in the light of kittens or puppies which amuse by their frolic and capers; even Reynolds' *Infant Samuel* suggests the notion of a child set to say its prayers. But the serious candour, the *ideas*, intense and deep sentiments which mingle confusedly with the existence of children, their own moral grandeur, origin and source of what they will become, had not been reached before Mr. Millais. If indeed he has taken delight in regarding women, young girls and children, as forming part of an actual fairyland, the heroines of a great poem of flowers, colours and light, he has also had the instinct to conceive them under a somewhat sacred character, with the most perfect simplicity and exquisite delicacy.

He alone who conceived children in this light could have painted *The Princess in the Tower* and felt how much that sinister winding staircase full of shadows and dangers added to the cruel terrors of the uncompleted drama which he places before us. The boys show true nobleness and courage in the anxiety and dread that begin to fall upon them, but which they master like princes. They grasp each other's hands



THE HALL.

tightly and draw closer together; the forsaken children about to be slain prove themselves already heroic and worthy of their rank.

Then as regards women and young girls, the series of works that he has devoted to them is unique in the history of painting. Men have their undertakings, war, ambition and politics to occupy them: women have only love to engage their thoughts, and our business pursuits, wars and ambitions are enemies of the affections and consequently of women. These last only live for us, and all that makes up our public life strikes and wounds them; but when we are stricken they console us and stanch our wounds. To write a letter is to us a trifle, we indite any number of them on every kind of subject; but women only understand one sort of letter — that of love. This thought, as it seems to me, is the one that has chiefly directed Mr. Millais in producing all these glorious scenes of feminine life, from *Effie Deans* in her coarse cotton dress, to the lady in her gold-braided habit, who, standing on the stirrup-steps in front of a castle, awaits her horse, humming the while *Charley is my darling*. — The letter plays its part in the works of the painter. *Stella* and *Vanessa* are about to reply to Swift; one is all sorrowful, the other indignant; but what pleases me most is the uncertainty and hesitation of the young girl in *Yes or No*. A power of delineation of the highest order is needed to

detect so justly in the slight inflections of the eye, one of the most undecided, most fleeting, and most difficult expressions that it is possible to reproduce. In the same way I am struck by the indefinable air of *The Gambler's Wife*, who seems to seek in the cards an explanation of the mysterious witchery that draws her husband far from her side and makes him turn a deaf ear to all her advice.

Nothing more frank and innocent could be found than the *Princess Elizabeth*; her eyes raised towards Heaven and seeking the most eloquent words she can use on behalf of her father, the King. — Not a symptom of exaggeration or weakness, but always the true note struck. An artist of great talent has just exhibited a very fine picture, *The Death Warrant*; but for a child, the young sovereign is too overwhelmed and unhinged. A



THE FOUNTAIN.

child does not, nor can he, feel like a man; though the cruellest thoughts beset him he is still a child, and his emotions are confused with clouds. Mr. Millais has the marvellous quality of never losing sight of this fact.

One could not suffer one's thoughts to dwell on that tender epic of love and duty, of woman a prey to deep and cruel sentiments, which, when a man is concerned, come into conflict with love and patriotic duty, as in *The Black Brunswicker*; with religious conviction, as in *The Huguenot*; with fidelity to political principles, as in *The Proscribed Royalist*; with the obligations of race, as in *The Bride of Lammermoor*; or when a prey to the selfishness of man, with the difference of rank, as in *Effie Deans*; or with ingratitude and indifference as in *Stella*, and *Vanessa*, without observing the innate peculiar fidelity of her soul. Tossed upon the stormy waves of man's existence, woman shines upon all with love's soft radiance, as the star looks down upon the tempest.

I have not met in the works of any other artist the same penetrating sentiment, that moral harmony accompanied by so rich a flow of colour, nor in that outward luxury of art, which enfolds deep thoughts, ideas so noble, delicate and persistent in their recurrence.

In French art there is an *abatage*—if the vulgarity of the term be pardoned—of coarse methods, efforts to create an impression are put forth in the shape of corpses, poniards, wounds, upraised arms and



shrivelled bodies, and it was almost by chance that a man like Delacroix discovered under his pencil the sublime figure of the old woman in *The Massacre of Scio*. — With a hardly perceptible gesture, a fold of the eyelid, a movement of the finger, or a hand lightly resting on an object, a stream of emotion rises and passes in the person who stands before one of Mr. Millais' works.

Moreover, I have not observed any picture of his in which women or children do not appear. If the maritime grandeur of his country influences him strongly — as for instance when he wished to celebrate on canvas *Sir Walter Raleigh* and *The North-West Passage* — he manages to introduce women and children always with a remarkable simplicity and originality of conception.



THE STUDIO

To my mind it was a charming thought to seat at the feet of the old whaling captain a young girl reading the old log-book, and to have placed on the sailor's hand — rigid with the patriotic desire of new glory — the hand of that young girl to calm and at the same time to encourage him.

The study of hands, has, I repeat, been to English painters a pre-occupation, and at Kensington you see what care they have taken to make separate drawings of hands before painting them in their pictures. The splendid portrait which Mr. Millais has painted of Mrs. Kennard and exhibited at the Royal Academy, with its magnificently tragic face, has shown me hands that I rank with the most exquisite in form and manipulation of colour ever put on canvas.

In his Biblical paintings, wherein the artist responds to another national sentiment, circumscribed by the subject, he has represented the male form alone, as in the *Satan* of storm and darkness already mentioned, and in *Victory, O Lord!* showing Moses with hands upraised the whole day in order that God may grant victory to his people. This last work is an exceedingly vigorous and harmonious picture, highly finished yet bold in colouring. Here, again, the gestures and attitudes belong to those creations which are attributes of this artist alone. Moses, overcome with fatigue and exhaustion, gives way to weariness while bowing his head towards the earth, with fixed eye he continues to murmur his appeal: *Victory, O Lord!* Aaron and Hur, their minds bent on the fate of their nation, have no other thought than that of holding his two arms aloft with the convulsive energy of reaction from lassitude. The last effort is decisive. A grand sky filled with the

hues of sunset displays itself in the rear of the three figures on the summit of a rock; and lower down, against the horizon, in a cloud of golden, lurid dust, and mingling with the sun-tinted clouds of heaven, agitate the confused masses of combatants. — There is but one more familiar characteristic that I wish to indicate in Mr. Millais' work. It is the cordiality which the artist inspires. A French poet once said to me that when he observed a writer or painter introduce animals into his work, and especially dogs, he regarded the fact as an augury that he was a large-hearted and humane man. Now I perceive that the dog plays his part in Mr. Millais' pictures, entering into human joys and sorrows. He appears in *Effie Deans*, *The Order of Release*, and *The Black Brunswicker*.

I cannot within the limits of this study enlarge upon the portraits painted by Mr. Millais. — In this walk he follows the ideal of life and truth, brightness and visible force, and gives a deep expression of that sentiment which never leaves him. There is much simplicity of attitude in his portraits which reflect both the character and appearance of the whole individual, according to the exterior and interior working of Nature.

An artist essentially original and creative in that England which has produced so many original temperaments, Mr. Millais is, after Reynolds and Gainsborough, the first painter of his country. He is also one of the greatest which our century has called forth. Finally, in the matter of artistic conceptions appertaining to all times and schools, he takes up a distinct position, unapproached by any other master. In him we have an example of a man who, to quote the words of his friend Mr. Watts, was born to be a painter, and who has cast his whole being into that vocation.

E. DURANTY.



THE ORDER OF RELEASE, PAINTED BY MR. MILLAIS IN THE YEAR OF 1852

## EDITORIAL NOTE

*Duranty had scarcely completed this biography of Mr. Millais, when he was attacked by a fatal illness and died suddenly before he had been able to revise the work for the press. In the general preface which will accompany this publication, I shall take occasion to speak of the distinguished talent of M. Duranty, one of the most original of modern critics, endowed with a character of singular loyalty and candour, wholly independent of the influence of any party or clique and who was justly esteemed in France as one of the champions of "naturalism" in the best and truest acceptation of the word.*

*Out of respect for his memory I have thought it best to leave his work as it came from his hand, without introducing into the text even such modifications as it might fairly be assumed he would have made for himself. But at the same time it is equally my duty to point out and to correct certain inaccuracies, as regards matters of fact, which appear in the biography. One of these inaccuracies consists in stating that Mr. Millais designed the staircase and the Seal of the Fountain on the first floor of his house. In point of fact Mr. Millais did but communicate his ideas on these subjects to the sculptor Mr. Boehm, and to Mr. Hardwick the architect, and it is to the latter gentleman that the design of Mr. Millais' house down to its minutest detail is due. Knowing Mr. Millais as well as I do, I feel that he would be the last person to take credit for what he is not fairly entitled to.*

*In reference to the sketch of Mrs. Langtry's portrait, the translation which describes this work is incorrectly rendered, for it contains expressions of which the nature of the biographer was entirely incapable. It was only when reading the printed work in its complete state, and when it was too late to correct the errors I have mentioned, that my attention was directed to them; the following extract from the manuscript gives the biographer's precise words :*

*Un peu plus loin est le portrait de Madame Langtry, cette nouvelle beauté que les peintres anglais semblent vouloir se disputer, comme jadis leurs prédécesseurs se disputèrent mistress Siddons; l'ingénuité juvénile dans une complexion robuste, à forte ossature, un visage rosé vif, à traits vigoureux, de hautes épaules à la ligne toute droite, un buste étroit qui se profile en corbeille, resserrant et faisant remonter la gorge, telle est l'image de Madame Langtry.*

*Duranty manifested the strongest desire to read the translation of his manuscript in order that he might see that it was faithfully reproduced, but death decided otherwise; and I now beg of my readers to bear in mind that the object aimed at in the translation has been rather to render the original faithfully than to produce a work more elegant perhaps, but less loyal.*

*I have only to add that among the distinctions bestowed upon Mr. Millais, are, the honorary memberships of the Academies of Antwerp, Madrid, Rome and the grade of Academician of the Royal Scotch Academy. Mr. Millais was also created Officier of the Légion d'Honneur in 1878 on the occasion of his being the recipient of one of the two Grand Gold Medals awarded at the Paris Exhibition of that year. Subsequently Mr. Millais received the honorary degree of D. C. L., at Oxford.*





HUBERT HERKOMER, A.R.A.







THE TWO LOVES. Painted by H. Herkomer, A.R.A.

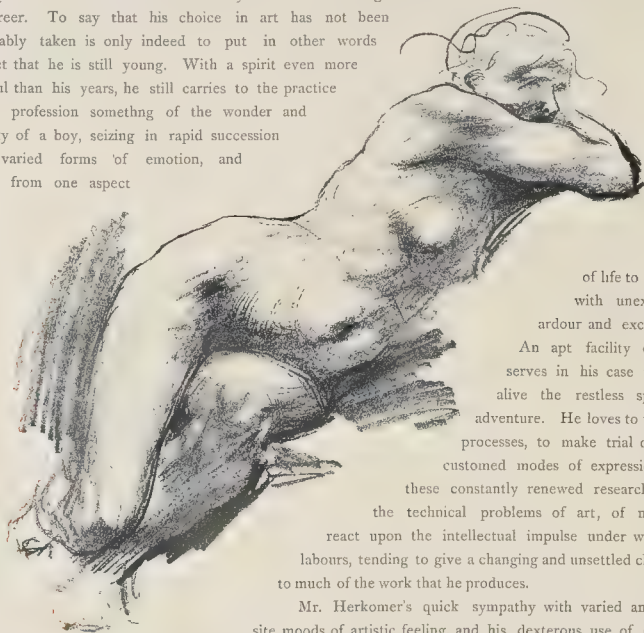
## HUBERT HERKOMER, A.R.A.



R. HERKOMER represents with typical force and vigour some of the most characteristic tendencies of contemporary art in England. He is endowed with a nature keenly sympathetic and susceptible, which enables him to feel, and to reflect, the varied and fluctuating ideals that beset the painter of our day; and his ready technical faculty, joined to an exceptional energy of disposition, serve equally to render him a capable exponent of an epoch in art that is especially marked by experiment and seeking.

No one who is familiar with the man or with his work can doubt for a moment that Mr. Herkomer has rightly chosen his vocation. He is an artist by temperament, and by an innate gift of craftsmanship. But although he already occupies a representative position among the painters of his time, it would be hazardous at present to pronounce a final judgment upon his talent. What he has accomplished offers ample material for study, and is rich in promise for the future: it has justly been counted sufficient to win for its author distinction and fame; and by the close and vivid relation which it bears to the wider artistic movement of our time it is full of interest and suggestion. But it nevertheless remains true that it would be premature, as yet, to attempt to define or to limit the ultimate direction of his powers. Nor does it imply any disparagement of Mr. Herkomer's abilities to declare that his art is still in what may be called an experimental stage of development. There arrives a time in the life of every artist of original gift when the growth of certain settled convictions of style gradually but surely determines the scope and purpose of

his studies. With some men a purely personal conception of beauty, with others an unconscious preference for certain chosen aspects of Nature, comes at last to stamp the work of their hand with the permanent mark of individual character. As the knowledge of Nature deepens, the need of selection presses more urgently upon the artist, for art is an empire too vast to be held under the undivided sway of a single intelligence, and the subtlest truths of form and colour, the last refinements of human character and expression, are only surrendered to those who are content to labour with definite concentration of purpose. Mr. Herkomer has scarcely arrived at this stage in his career. To say that his choice in art has not been irrevocably taken is only indeed to put in other words the fact that he is still young. With a spirit even more youthful than his years, he still carries to the practice of his profession something of the wonder and curiosity of a boy, seizing in rapid succession upon varied forms of emotion, and passing from one aspect



A fac-simile from the Artist's Sketch-Book.

of life to another, with unexhausted ardour and excitement.

An apt facility of hand serves in his case to keep alive the restless spirit of adventure. He loves to test new processes, to make trial of unaccustomed modes of expression, and these constantly renewed researches into the technical problems of art, of necessity react upon the intellectual impulse under which he labours, tending to give a changing and unsettled character to much of the work that he produces.

Mr. Herkomer's quick sympathy with varied and opposite moods of artistic feeling, and his dexterous use of different materials, are facts which must constantly be taken into account in the judgment of his career. It will be plain to those who are

familiar with his works in the past that they are often strangely unequal both in quality and character. Success in his case has never had the effect of inducing a mannered monotony of performance, and his progress has been for this reason sometimes interrupted and uncertain. With many other painters such a success as the picture of *The Last Muster* secured for its author would have resulted in a life-long devotion to the pathos of old pensioners. But Mr. Herkomer had no sooner achieved his triumph than he set his mind at once in a different direction. "I lost favour with the public," he writes himself, "and showed some feebleness in the new efforts, but it prevented me from being spoiled by the success of the one picture." Mr. Herkomer does not here exaggerate the danger to a young painter which comes of such a success as he had gained, though perhaps he has not always perfectly understood wherein lies the surest safeguard against the vices of mannerism. It is not so much by deliberate change of theme, as by ever closer and more persistent study of truth, that a painter finds the way of escape from the evil of self-repetition. For his own sake, therefore, and in the interests of his own work, he has perhaps allowed himself at times to be led too far afield. And yet if we consider his peculiar temperament, and the influences amid which his art has grown up, we shall find enough to account for the course he has adopted. The shifting and unsettled purpose of much of his work is strongly characteristic of the artistic sentiment of our generation. Now, almost for the first time in the history of the English

School, there has arisen an earnest and widespread ambition to find adequate language in painting for the utterance of intellectual ideas. Art has been fired by the splendid achievements of literature, and desires to emulate, after its own fashion, the force and fulness of expression which belongs to modern poets and writers of fiction. The immediate effect of this enlarged ambition has been to bring the painter face to face with manifold untried problems, towards the solution of which past example can help him scarcely at all. The tradition of English art offers but little support in the realm of inventive design. It is only in the kindred departments of portrait and landscape, that we can be said to possess a truly national school; and if we look to the past the name of Hogarth stands almost alone as the representative of the kind of art which seeks to present



FAC-SIMILE FROM THE ARTIST'S SKETCH BOOK

the truths of character and passion. The painter of our day who attempts to embody the thoughts and feelings of his age is thus beset by innumerable perplexities and embarrassments. If he appropriates to his own use the great principles of style, which belonged to the masters of the sixteenth century, he is apt to discover that their heroic dialect will not readily lend itself to the uses of modern pathos; and, on the other hand, the endeavour to proceed without regard to precept or tradition, ends but too often in a transparent imitation of the methods proper to literature, with a corresponding neglect of the special laws and limitations of the painter's own craft. It is little wonder, at such a time, if the young artist, just entering upon his career, should be attracted by varied and opposite ideals. He may resolutely declare to himself that the modern spirit needs its own language, and yet he will often regret the loss of beauty that seems a necessity of his task; or if he strives to reproduce the grace and nobility of ancient art he must be sometimes haunted by the suspicion that the result of his labours has no claim upon modern sympathies, and that the art which he loves belongs to the past indeed.



Out of this realm of confused and conflicting ideals the modern school may be trusted to find a way of its own. The very keenness of the struggle is itself a witness to vitality, and the earnest study of Nature, by which men of opposite views seek to test and support their convictions, will surely supply in the end a means of conciliation. But in the meantime every young painter of eager and sensitive temperament must perforce be affected by the varying influences to which he finds himself exposed: and it will always be an interesting study to trace in the career of an individual, the manner and measure in which his work reflects the prevalent ideas of his time.

Mr. Herkomer's progress as a painter is in this sense peculiarly suggestive. But before considering in what way he stands related to other artists, who were his predecessors or his contemporaries, it will be well



A SKETCH FROM THE ARTIST'S SKETCH BOOK

to set out the circumstances of his birth and early boyhood. He was born at Waal, in Bavaria, on the 26th of May, 1849, the son of parents who may both be said to have contributed to his artistic education. His father was by profession a carver in wood, his mother was a teacher of music. It was beside his father's carving-bench that Hubert Herkomer gained his first practical instruction in art. It was by this means, as he says himself, that he learned the use of his hands; and it was then, as we cannot doubt, that he first acquired that aptitude in the mechanical part of his art which has since been so strongly developed. His parents were poor and had to struggle hard for a livelihood. Perhaps at the time they may have regretted that they could not grant to the lad a more complete and thorough course of education. And yet in a certain sense he was happily circumstanced. In earlier times the craftsmanship of art held a more prominent place in the training of a painter, and it is rather the defect of our modern civilisation that a youth is often left to learn the use of his hands until after he has exhibited some strong bias towards the practice of design. In many instances, indeed, an artist's powers of expression are permanently crippled from the lack of this early apprenticeship of the fingers. He is embarrassed by common mechanical difficulties, at a time when he should be free to expend all his resources upon the higher problems of invention, or the more subtle refinements of technical skill, and it may be questioned whether, even the most persistent study of mature life, ever quite atones for the loss of this early training in the principles of skilled workmanship.

The elder Herkomer seems, in his youth at least, to have possessed something of the eager and adventurous temperament which has descended to his son. In the year 1851, when Hubert was scarcely two years old, the family quitted their quiet dwelling in Bavaria, and set out upon a pilgrimage to America. The narrow village life had grown irksome to the wood-carver, who was fascinated by the desire to travel, and the wish to see strange lands. But the life in America proved upon experience to be a disappointment. The trying climate of Ohio told severely both upon the young painter and upon his mother, and after six years, absence it was decided to make another move, this time to England. Accordingly in the year 1857 the Herkomer family came over to settle in Southampton. At this time Hubert was eight years old, and a delicate child for his age. He was not strong enough to go to school like other boys, and thus began that constant companionship with his father, who still laboured at wood-carving, though with but scant encouragement from those amongst whom he had settled. In this respect, as Mr. Herkomer truly says, the



FACSIMILE FROM THE ARTIST'S SKETCH-BOOK.

choice of residence was unfortunate enough. A provincial town like Southampton is not exactly the place for a struggling artist to make his way, but it at least had the advantage of possessing a school of art, and here the young painter may be said to have definitely entered upon his career. When he had been about two years at the Southampton school his father made up his mind to return for a while to his native land. He wished to give his son a course of serious study in Munich, and so Hubert, having first been naturalized as an Englishman, was carried off and placed under the care of Professor Echter, an artist who did his best to impress upon his pupil the principles of academic style. Six months passed in this way, the master's teaching proving perhaps less effective than the constant study of the nude which Herkomer was able to make during his sojourn abroad. He was already strongly attracted towards a realistic manner of painting, and was besides possessed by a burning desire "to do something original"; and in this temper he naturally grew impatient under the control of academic teaching. Moreover, a return to England became



GUARD ROOM AT ALDERSHOT  
(Fac-simile from the Artist's Sketch-Book.)

imperative unless he were content to forfeit the rights of English citizenship, for passports were then only granted for six months at a time.

On his return to England, towards the close of the year 1865, Herkomer began to try his hand at original work,—not however, as we may suppose, with very satisfactory results. "Many and ambitious and disastrous were the subjects attempted; my good father being the model for the Davids, the Barbarossas, and the Apollos." Such is the painter's own reference to this part of his career, and that he had the good sense to recognise the immaturity of his powers is proved by the fact that in the spring of the following year he again took to studentship and entered the Schools at South Kensington. This may be taken as the turning-point in Herkomer's career. The new life, as he tells us, brought with it new associates and new aims. For the first time he came directly into contact with the dominant influences which were at work in the English School. The name of Frederick Walker exercised a sort of charm over the students at South Kensington, and Herkomer willingly yielded to the general enthusiasm. There is something remarkable, and even surprising, in the reverence that was felt for Walker by his younger contemporaries. His art possessed none of the showy qualities which might be thought most fascinating to youth: it was modest in its aim and careful rather than brilliant in the manner of its execution: in easy command of technical resource it could not then or at any time compare with the art of Millais; and



even in the department of wood-draughtsmanship, where Walker's influence was most strongly felt, Millais had in reality been the first to raise revolt against the old conventional methods. And yet it was to Walker more than to Millais that the younger men turned for example and encouragement. The secret of his leadership is perhaps to be found not so much in the strength of his work, as in its tendency. He stood almost alone, among English painters of the time, in showing how modern material might be moulded to the service of an artistic idea. He laboured always with a refined and delicate sentiment of beauty, and yet he did not seek to escape from the realities of modern life by suppressing or violating the obvious facts of costume. To those who, like Herkomer, were striving to make art a direct expression of the life of their time such an example was full of hope and promise. Without deserting their newly-found faith,



GUARD ROOM AT ALDERSHOT  
(Fac-simile from the Artist's Sketch-Book).

here, as they thought, was a way of satisfying at the same time the higher claims of pictorial beauty. Beginning, as most of them did, with work for the wood-engraver, they found Walker's example and method ready to their hand, just as Walker himself, in his earlier years, had found the same field occupied by the traditions of Sir John Gilbert's facile style. Looking back to this imitative phase of his art Mr. Herkomer distinguishes one permanent benefit that he derived from Walker's influence. Walker, as he truly says, never laboured without an idea. Even his studies are not pieces of mere dexterous imitation. Within its proper limits each one of them is a picture, to this extent at least, that it bears the stamp of individual sentiment and purpose. It is too commonly assumed, by those who adopt the profession of painting, that they can study Nature first and become artists afterwards; that the intellectual motive, which gives its value to design, will come of its own accord, and as if by magic, so soon as the painter seriously undertakes the labour of making a picture. But to those who have in themselves the higher sentiment of art a fact that is worth study is always in itself a subject. They do not need to wait for any special inspiration. Their efforts at faithful interpretation of reality are from the first controlled by a

feeling for beauty, and the so-called "subject," when it comes, is only the text by the help of which they are allowed to expound, and to display, an artistic faith that has long lain ready for utterance.

As a natural result of his apprenticeship at South Kensington, Herkomer began to try his hand at drawing upon wood. For a while he still kept his head-quarters at Southampton, employed from time to time by Mr. Dalziel, and making comic cartoons for a weekly journal called the *Censor*. But after a year and a half, spent in this desultory way, he moved to London, and took lodgings with his friend Herbert Johnson in Smith Street, Chelsea. "Never shall I forget," he writes, "paying the first week's rent. Eight shillings and sixpence! How many times we turned the silver over in our hands and



A. C. GALSWORTHY  
Portrait from the Artists' Study-Block

thought, 'all that for one week's rent' for we hadn't earned it." While he laboured hard at remunerative work in black and white, Herkomer was also studying water-colour, and here, too, he was haunted by the example and influence of Walker. In the autumn of 1869 he contrived to get out of town for a trip to Sussex, and there he made his first serious essay in colour, which in the spring of the following year found its way to the Water-Colour Exhibition at the Dudley Gallery. The acceptance of this drawing was the first sign of public encouragement which the young artist had received. The talent which it displayed was warmly recognized by the Dudley Committee, with Mr. Marks and Mr. Arthur Severn at their head, and its success with the public proved of practical service to the painter. Shortly afterwards he submitted a block to the conductors of the *Graphic*, and was henceforth a recognized member of the staff of that journal. The second drawing which he executed for publication was a rough draft of the Chelsea Pensioners in church.

The *Graphic*, during the earlier years of its existence, exercised a powerful influence in forming the talent of the younger school of English artists; and the work, which was done in its service, has given a definite direction to a phase of contemporary art. It was by no mere accident that Mr. Herkomer found himself employed upon its staff. A number of young men of talent, struggling like himself, were inevitably attracted to the new venture, as affording them a sure and steady means of livelihood. It is remarkable how many of them have since gained distinction in the higher walks of the profession, and I may mention amongst others the names of Luke Fildes, Small, Charles Green and E. J. Gregory. Mr. Herkomer now looks back with satisfaction to this period of apprenticeship, and the training which he then acquired had doubtless much in it that was wholesome and useful. It served to bring the artist face to face with the facts of everyday life, and gave him some facility in their expression. He was led to look to subjects he would not perhaps have willingly chosen, for qualities of character, and even of design, that might otherwise have passed unsuspected and unobserved. In this way the younger school of painters acquired a firmer grasp of reality. They learned to find beauty in aspects of life from which they might otherwise have been repelled; and from the necessity of giving to each one of these drawings something of the charm and attractiveness of a picture, art, in its new desire for naturalism, was perhaps saved from some of the cruder exhibitions of realism which have marked the progress of kindred ideas in the continental schools. But on the other hand it must be owned that the conditions under which such work was produced were unfavourable to the qualities of thoroughness and refinement. The beauty of a subject, however simple, cannot be exhausted by the study of a few weeks: the apparent force and completeness of the representation, were therefore in many instances misleading; and to the artists themselves such practice was in a measure injurious. For these *Graphic* blocks were not put forward as mere suggestions of design, they possessed for the most part little of the slightness of a sketch, nor could they lay claim to the higher merit of true perfection of finish.

The effects of this season of apprenticeship to the *Graphic* were easily traceable in Mr. Herkomer's earlier

efforts as a painter. As a draughtsman on the wood he had acquired a power of rapid invention which for a while far outstripped his technical resource in the use of colour; and accordingly his first exhibited picture shows far less independence of thought and style than he had already displayed in many of his drawings in black and white. In the use of the simpler material he had indeed begun to assert his own individuality, but when he tried to express himself upon canvas he reverted, perhaps unconsciously, to an earlier and more distinctly imitative manner. His first picture sent to the Academy of 1872 was confessedly produced under the influence of Frederick Walker, and yet before this time Herkomer had made and published the drawing which was afterwards to serve as the foundation of the now celebrated *Last Muster*. But, even making full allowance for its purely



FIDDLE MAKER IN THE ALPS (MITTENWALD)  
(Fac-simile from the Artist's Sketch-Book).

imitative character, this first picture was a striking and beautiful work. The feeling for the charm and grace of rustic life was genuinely expressed, though it was frankly appropriated from the art of another. He had carried the spirit of Walker to the distant scenery of the Bavarian Alps, and had contrived to graft some of the most attractive qualities of Walker's design upon the forms of German peasants. The picture had a success though it was of course easy to detect the influences under which it was produced. To those who were competent to form an opinion, the imitative character of the work implied no reproach. Imitation is the privilege of youth, and it is often most clearly and candidly expressed in the art of men who are destined in the future to establish their own independence. What commonly goes by the name of originality is very often a worthless quality too highly esteemed and too ardently pursued. The only kind of originality that deserves the name is indeed a fruit of slow and patient growth, bred not by wilful rejection of earlier example, but by long and intimate converse with Nature; and an artist is in the highest sense original when the beauty that he presents in his work is legitimately won from Nature, when the graces of his style can be traced back to their source



in reality, and have been proved and tested by reference to the actual facts upon which they are based. The attempt to burst upon the world with a brand-new style in art is therefore only a vulgar pretence. Strangeness, or novelty of manner has nothing admirable in itself, and the youth who can prove that he deeply reverences the art of another, is most likely to possess in himself that reverence for Nature which is the only true basis of new discovery.

Mr. Herkomer has a right to look back with pleasure to the picture of *After the Toil of the Day*; and perhaps at the time he may have felt too keenly the reproach of imitation which, in certain quarters, it called forth. For a while at any rate he seems to have been troubled and distracted in his work, and it was not until the beginning of the year 1875 that he commenced his second large oil picture, the now famous *Last Muster*. In the meantime he had married and was spending much of his time abroad, amid the romantic scenery of the Bavarian Highlands. He executed during these days a few water-colour drawings which found their way to the Gallery of the Institute. To this body he had been elected with Mr. Gregory in 1871, and had since been a steady contributor, sending, amongst other things, a version of *Der Buttang*; which was afterwards carried out upon a larger scale in oil. Soon after his marriage Herkomer moved into the house he now occupies, and here he was joined by his father, whose workshop stands beside that of his son, and who still labours with undiminished energy and ardour at his old calling. With his peculiar temperament Mr. Herkomer has doubtless done wisely in choosing a country home, for his is a nature that does not need the spur of companionship with his fellow-artists. He has nothing of the indolence that often goes side by side with the artistic spirit, and the visitor to his pretty little cottage finds himself at once in a busy hive where the labour is constant and unceasing. The simple and secluded manner of his life would perhaps be irksome to other men differently constituted, and less eager and excitable, but in Herkomer's case it provides a wholesome and necessary repose. He is full of mechanical resource, and knows how to supply himself with varied and ample occupation. In one corner of the studio, lately enlarged under the painter's personal superintendence, stands the etching table, and on the other side of the house are separate apartments for mixing colours, and for printing and drying the proofs. In all these different branches of his work the artist takes the keenest interest. The strong practical turn of his mind serves as a healthy counterpoise to the exercise of an ardent and impressionable temperament, and the comparative isolation of a country life, saves him from the waste of energy, to which he might possibly be exposed, if he were tempted to give unrestrained indulgence to his fondness for experiment. For there exists in Herkomer, side by side with his purely artistic ambition, something of the passion of an inventor. The fervid enthusiasm with which he labours is coloured by a grain of scientific curiosity, and he therefore specially needs tranquillity, in order that his faculties may be steadily concentrated upon the work in hand.

It was on the 1st of January, 1875, as he tells us himself, that the *Last Muster* was begun. Although he had by this time taken up his abode at Bushey, the picture was in fact executed in the old quarters at Chelsea. "I painted it," he writes, "in the small glass studio I had built in the garden at Smith

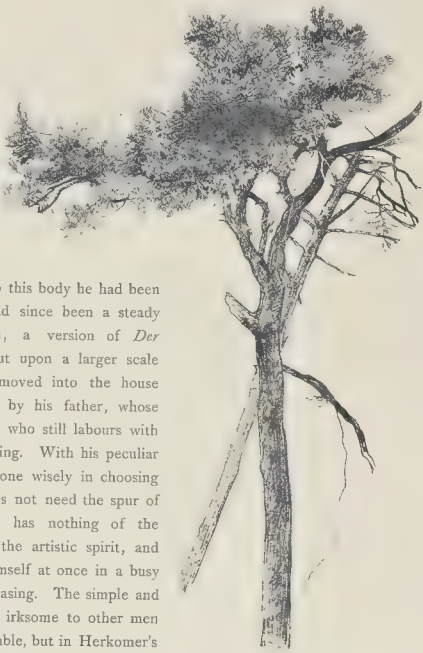


FIG. 1. HERKOMER  
FROM THE ARTIST'S SKETCH BOOK



AFTER THE TOIL OF THE DAY.





Street (which was only one foot wider than the picture itself when in its frame), and finished it by a desperate effort for that year's Academy Exhibition, feeling sure it would not be hung, as it seemed so unlike any picture I had ever seen." But it was hung nevertheless, and hung well. Long before the 1st of May the painter received congratulatory letters from Sir Frederick Leighton and Mr. Richmond, two prominent members of the Council; and when the exhibition opened, the public quickly and emphatically confirmed the judgment of the Hanging Committee. To this remarkable performance Herkomer owes his fame, and nothing that he has since accomplished has served to efface or greatly to increase the impression which he then achieved. As he himself admits, it was *The Last Muster* that gained for him one of the two grand Medals of Honour awarded to England at the Paris Exhibition of 1878, and, to quote his own words, it has been "like a good talisman" to him ever



GOD'S SHRINE.

since. It will be worth-while therefore to consider what special qualities are to be found in this work, to account for the exceptional favour with which it has been received. And it may perhaps help to a just conception of its merit if we first clearly define to ourselves the acknowledged limitations of its design. Herkomer at this time was scarcely twenty-six years old and it would be obviously absurd to assume that he had already conquered all the most difficult problems of his art. If, then, this youthful performance remains in a certain sense more satisfying and complete than any of his later essays, it must be, to some extent at least, because the requirements of the work fell fortunately within his resources. Nor does the fact, should it be admitted, take anything from the credit of the result. To encounter difficulties for their own sake is no part of the functions of an artist. The utmost force in painting is consistent with the most absolute simplicity, and a picture may be said to have every quality if it has all that the chosen subject demands. And herein lies the secret of Herkomer's remarkable success. Since the painting of *The Last Muster* he has grappled with more difficult problems of art than any which he there had to encounter, but he has never so happily measured his own resources. He has advanced in power of composition and arrangement and yet none of his later designs have been so convincing or effective; he has sought

to render aspects of contemporary life pregnant with deeper truths of sentiment and pathos more fruitful in suggestion of drama, and requiring in the painter new qualities of invention, together with a more subtle discrimination of individual character. Yet, in spite of the general growth of artistic power which he has undoubtedly displayed, and to which, at times, insufficient justice has been done, it remains I think indisputably true that even in regard to the qualities just described *The Last Muster* still stands as the most forcible and complete of all his achievements. It is a picture of the simplest structure and yet the design leaves but little to desire: without affecting extraordinary emphasis of dramatic representation it is nevertheless strongly and touchingly impressive: and though there is no attempt to mend or modify the realities of which it treats, the result has, by common consent, a genuine and appropriate beauty.

To define the sources of this superiority would carry us far into the philosophy of art, but there



AT DEATH'S DOOR.

is one point, of obvious significance in connection with the subject, which ought not to pass unobserved. In many of his later pictures Mr. Herkomer has started with an independent idea, which he has sought to illustrate by reference to actual fact. He has attempted to fit Nature to the needs of his own design, forced by the exigencies of his task to find or to create the types of character that are required for his drama, and to fix for himself the gesture and facial expression which best serve to convey the emotional truth he desires to express. In taking this course Mr. Herkomer has only followed the example of nearly all the painters of our time who are striving to mirror our complex modern life. But, whatever may be the merits of this mode of invention, it was not that which he adopted when he conceived and executed *The Last Muster*. Here the process is indeed exactly reversed. Instead of seeking to impose his own impressions upon Nature, the painter has allowed himself to be inspired by the facts as they are presented to him. All the available resources at his command are expended upon a full and impartial record of reality, and so vividly is the scene brought before us, with such a fine perfection of the varied character of these old men, and with so much of tender sympathy for their common lot, that the result seems richer in suggestion of drama than the most pathetic history of individual lives. As we owe to the influence of such a work, boasting none of the graces of intricate design or cunningly schemed harmonies of colour, we are made to feel that a fact, reverently and gravely rendered, has always its rightful place in art. The painter who is content with simple reality never needs an excuse, and if he only possess

sufficient imagination to detect and distinguish the essential significance of the facts he studies, he has already at his feet an inexhaustible world of beauty. But when, deserting this wide realm of fact, he begins to trust to his own invention his safety is no longer assured. He may perhaps win a higher triumph, but he wins it at a greater cost and with increased risk of failure. At every step that separates him from strict adherence to reality, the claims of beauty grow stronger; and yet, for every beauty that is to endure, he must still produce the warranty of Nature. The material that he employs must now be refashioned to fit the requirements of his idea: in the character of his models there will be either more or less than he needs; the expression of their faces is not the expression that he seeks; and yet, if he has the temper of a realist, it will sometimes intrude itself to disturb and weaken the original idea. These are only a few of the manifold difficulties that beset the painter of ideal invention who strives to translate a dramatic incident into the language of art. From most of them Mr. Herkomer was free at the time he painted *The Last Muster*. For although there is a touch of intentional pathos in the picture it is not pressed so strongly as to dominate the composition as a whole. What mainly impresses us here is the varied and faithful characterization, the patient portraiture of faces, that a painter less earnest and capable would scarcely have troubled to realize so completely. Mr. Herkomer has treated his models as though they were exacting clients who had insisted upon a faithful likeness. He has introduced no fanciful type of old pensioner to suit a preconceived notion, but, taking the old men's faces as he found them, has proceeded in a style of sober and searching realism to render to each its appropriate character. Herein lies the truly original quality of Mr. Herkomer's achievement; and in thus, clearly breaking with the ordinary and received methods of picture-making, he displayed a marked independence not of thought alone, but of perception and executive power. For although it is true in a certain sense that the influence of Walker is still perceptible, yet the real strength of the picture rests upon qualities that could not be derived from example. Even if the entire subject and scheme of design had been deliberately borrowed Mr. Herkomer would still have had to trust to himself, and to himself alone, for the production of what is permanently valuable in his work. What he could have taken from another, others would have found it easy to take from him; and if imitation in such a case were possible we should doubtless have had numerous examples of the manner and merit of *The Last Muster*. This is the only sure test in such matters and, it is not sufficiently regarded. Painters who can be justly charged with imitation are themselves at the mercy of imitators; and yet it would be hard to say what young artist of our school could be trusted to produce such another picture as this group of old pensioners in church. It was indeed only because the fact itself had strongly impressed the artist that he was able in turn to impress the mind of the spectator. All that is most forcible and effective in the picture is taken directly from Nature: if it had been filtered through the brain of another it would most surely have lost in the transit the convincing stamp of reality, just as a portrait would lose in force and veracity if it were painted not from life but from a picture. For the real merit of *The Last Muster*, as I have already hinted, lies in the fulness and fidelity of its portraiture. Writing at the time of its first exhibition to the public this it was that most strongly impressed me, and the words which I then used seem to me to indicate correctly the source of its peculiar charm. "Never did an artist more studiously preserve in his work the natural simplicity of his



HER KOMER



subject. There has been no attempt to excite pathos, or even to compose a picture, in the ordinary sense of the term. In the general management of his material we may notice the skilful distribution of the rows of heads in their space, and the atmospheric truth, secured by the solidity and measured force of the modelling. The gradations of tone are nicely observed, and the strength of outline finely calculated, so as to carry the vision securely to the furthest limit of the interior of the building; but the strongest merit of the picture, the quality that makes it wonderful as a laborious and patient achievement, is the grasp of individual character in the different heads introduced. The artist has so placed himself as to get full variety of attitude and expression, and he succeeds in interesting us by what is neither more nor less than a gallery of portraits. We do not say that any dramatic element in the scene has been missed, but the subject is necessarily limited in this respect, and the character of the heads easily dominates all subordinate features of interest. And Mr. Herkomer, by the patience and skill of his workmanship, is able to support the scrutiny finally directed to this part of his work. The ranks of faces thus collected are full of varied individuality; and it is saying much for a performance that must have involved a very large amount of labour that there is nowhere any trace of failing energy."



INVENTIVE

I have lingered over this one picture because I think it expresses most clearly the central and dominant forces of Mr. Herkomer's art. In it he made the first distinct assertion of his own individuality, the earliest and most emphatic declaration of his artistic faith. What he has since attempted shows that he has both the ambition and the right to extend the exercise of his talent beyond these limits. He has proved himself to possess dramatic power of invention, as well as a graceful fancy, and he has produced work in design that occasionally reveals a genuine feeling for the higher beauties of form and style. But amid these varied occupations of his pencil the original bias towards what may be called the biographical study of life has constantly reappeared, and perhaps his greatest successes since *The Last Muster* have been in the department of pure portraiture or in that of realistic landscape. And there is, it may be observed, a natural association between these two branches of art. Very many of the greatest portrait painters of all times have found relief and delight in the study of outward Nature. In Venice, where the practice of portrait painting reached its highest development, modern landscape may be said to have taken its rise; and among the most precious possessions of collectors are Titian's vivid sketches of the country of Cadore. Rubens also, and Van Dyck, Velasquez, Rembrandt, and our own Gainsborough, may be cited as prominent instances of great portrait painters who loved the study of landscape, and the same tendency among living painters is powerfully illustrated in the work of Mr. Millais. In one sense indeed landscape may be counted only another form of portraiture. The face of Nature, like the human face, has its own special character, needing in its interpreter the same keenness of perception, the same power of patient and faithful realization, and it equally excludes, or can afford to exclude, the added attractions of incident and drama.



THE LAST MUSTER





"After *The Last Muster*," says Mr. Herkomer himself, in a short sketch of his own life from which I have already quoted, "much indifferent work followed." The criticism is perhaps too severe, but it is not altogether unjust. The natural excitement of success, acting upon a nervous temperament, was not favourable to production. "I was oppressed," he writes, "by the thought of what was expected of me," and in this mood he was of course least likely to be able to satisfy expectation. In the picture exhibited in the following year he took a new departure, reverting once more to the life and scenery of the Bavarian Highlands. *At Death's Door* was in many ways a striking and powerful performance, but its subject was of a kind that lent itself less readily to the painter's art. A picture that does not emphatically tell its own story is perhaps only the poorer for having a story to tell, and here the sentiment was so strongly individual, and even local, in its significance,



LIGHT, LIFE, AND MELODY.

that its appeal to an English public was of necessity uncertain and incomplete. A group of peasants kneeling in earnest prayer are awaiting the arrival of the priest who is coming to administer the last rites to a dying member of the family. The landscape is flushed with the fading glow of sunset, and across the valley the purple mountains stand in sharp outline against the evening sky. The soft warm light illumines the rafters of the little cottage, and overspreads the anxious, hopeless, faces of the mourners, so absorbed in their own grief that they are unconscious of the near approach of the priest, who has already reached the summit of the little mountain path. It will be seen at once how far removed was the ideal of such a work from that which governed *The Last Muster*. In a form new to himself, and strange to the public, the painter was here seeking to present a moment of strongest human passion, needing for its fit utterance the most subtle sense of dramatic truth and the most delicate technical power. It was no wonder if Mr. Herkomer found himself in a measure unprepared for such an adventure. The problems of invention were not only difficult in themselves, but they brought new elements of perplexity into the exercise of his craft as a painter. He could no longer work simply and directly from Nature, for he had to create as well as to interpret, and hence it is, that as a mere piece of painting, the result is in many respects inferior to the earlier performance. And yet, in spite of certain elements of failure, the picture exhibited a higher feeling for beauty than Mr. Herkomer had previously shown himself to possess. In the more youthful compositions, after the manner of Walker, there were to be found suggestions of grace in movement, which failed however to fit quite naturally to the forms to which they were attached. Here at least the beauty is of Mr. Herkomer's own finding, and it is expressed

in certain of the figures — more particularly in the kneeling form of the youngest woman — with delicate sense and refinement.

The exhibition of this picture brought into obvious prominence certain mannerisms in the use of colour which Mr. Herkomer at once set himself to correct. Among the less admirable results of Walker's influence upon the younger painters of our school was an exaggerated tendency towards unrelieved warmth of tone. His own practice had been in this respect a protest against an earlier fault in the opposite direction. The use of crude and cold colours disfigures even some of the best works of an earlier generation. Hideous varieties of mauve, and violet, and purple, were introduced even into the painting of human flesh, and combined with still more terrible tints of blue and arsenic green. In the endeavour to correct this defect, Walker was unconsciously carried into another extreme. His pictures have often a foxiness of tone which lapse of time does not tend to diminish; and the fault, noticeable even in some of his water-colours where he was a master of his material, takes a still more exaggerated form in his work in oil, a medium wherein quality and purity of colour are less easily preserved, and in which he remained to the last a less accomplished executant. Mr. Herkomer's picture *At Death's Door* shows that he had inherited a part of Walker's failing; and that he was sensible of it himself is proved by the determined change of manner which marks his picture of *Eventide*, exhibited two years later.

In the meantime the painter continued his study of Bavarian peasant life. The *Der Bittgang*, of 1877, belongs to the same class as the more striking composition of the preceding year. In subject it was even more remote from English sympathies. Mr. Herkomer did not at this time sufficiently allow for the strangeness to English eyes of forms of sentiment and ways of life that were, of course, perfectly familiar to him, nor did he measure correctly the distinction between the force of spoken words and the limited powers of pictorial design. In relation, as in nature, the incident here presented is touching enough. It is, it seems, the custom among the peasants of the Bavarian Alps to pass round their homesteads and through the growing crops praying as they go for a safe and bountiful harvest. In Mr. Herkomer's picture we see the several members of a little household thus reverently employed, while, in the back-ground, in the dip of the hills, a space of drifting and stormy sky seems to mock their devotion and to threaten their hopes. It will be obvious that the kind of beauty in sentiment and character which the painter has sought to exhibit could have been better displayed in connection with ideas of wider and more familiar association. The subject was treated with sufficient force and truth, but it demanded for its appreciation special knowledge of a particular local custom; and against this inherent disadvantage even the utmost skill in execution could only imperfectly avail. Yet the painting, it must be said, was in many respects of admirable quality. It was inspired by a finer feeling for the beauty of landscape than Mr. Herkomer had yet shown in work of this scale; and in the portraiture of the heads there was greater simplicity, both of character and method, than is to be found in the picture of the preceding year. But this advance in technical power shows itself even more decisively in the picture of *Eventide*, which appeared in the Academy of 1878. The subject carries us back to English life, a fact in itself of no small advantage to a painter who seeks to be understood by an English public and who professes to treat of the realities of modern feeling and sentiment. In the realm of ideal art, where the result depends upon abstract grace of form and considered beauty of design, an artist has a wide liberty of choice. He may draw his inspiration from the legends or myths that are the common inheritance of humanity and he may wander at will amid the life of distant lands and past ages. But to the realist who determines that his work shall be modern, in form as well as in essence, the facts that lie close at hand and are within the common experience of those to whom he makes his appeal will always constitute the surest foundation for the exercise of his powers. Mr. Herkomer was himself strongly attracted by the subject of his new picture. "I was much struck," he writes, "with the scene in Nature. I felt that every one of these old cronies had fought hard battles in their lives, — harder battles by far than those old warriors I had painted, — for they had to fight single-handed and not in battalions as the men did." But he seems to have felt a certain disappointment at the reception accorded to his picture, and it is not to be denied that its success with the public fell short of that to which *The Last Muster* had attained. He attributed this, himself, to the painful nature of the subject, believing, and perhaps rightly, that the world hates to be reminded of the sorrowful side of humanity. It must be allowed, however, that the mode of treatment here adopted was less direct and forcible, dwelling more upon the scenic elements of the composition and giving less prominence to individual

character. *The Last Muster* had succeeded by simple strength of portraiture, and if the heads of these aged paupers had been painted upon the same scale and with equal patience and fulness of detail, I make no doubt but that the picture of *Eventide* would have been equally successful. To establish the right relation in a design between the figures and their back-ground is always a difficult and delicate problem, and in this case, Mr. Herkomer had somewhat overpowered the elements of purely human interest by laying stress upon the cheerless spaces of bare wall, and the expanse of boarded floor which carried the eye away from the central group to the little window at the end of the apartment. The effect of cool light upon cool tones of colour was admirably worked out; and here, as I have said, the painter proved his ability to escape from the mannerism of his earlier style. Many of the faces also were portrayed with refinement and vigour, and with just the right admixture of sentiment to give effect to the artist's idea. Altogether this may be counted one of the most powerful, if not the most attractive, of Mr. Herkomer's productions. It bore witness to an undiminished sympathy with the pathetic aspect of modern life as well as to an increasing resource in matters of purely technical accomplishment. He had now fairly conquered some of the difficulties in the practice of oil painting which had previously stood in his way, and he was already intent upon a series of new experiments in a different material.

"I arrived at a new phase in my art," he writes, "with the portrait of *Richard Wagner*, for I found my way to the use of water-colour on a large scale." He, in fact, discovered a means of giving to the lighter medium much of the strength and solidity of oil, and having proved the worth of this process in portraiture, he proceeded to apply it to a large subject picture exhibited in the following year at the Grosvenor

Gallery. *Light, Life, and Melody* was in many ways a remarkable performance. The scene was once again taken from the life of the Bavarian Highlands, but this time the subject was one of simple and obvious significance. It was in short no more than a direct study of peasant character such as *Ostade* or *Teniers* might have chosen to present with only the slightest suggestion of a story and with no attempt at the display of strong human emotion. A group of labourers are collected in a drinking-booth, enjoying a mid-day pipe while they listen to the strains of a zither or amuse themselves with a game of bowls. The pretty waitress, as she moves about collecting payment from the customers, pauses for a moment beside the musician, and, as she does so, a youth, who is perhaps her lover, looks up with watchful and jealous glance from his place at the further extremity of the room. Such a theme, presenting no complexity of ideas, left the painter free to spend the whole force of his talent upon the technical part of his work; and it may be said without hesitation that the result was a piece of effective and vigorous realism that would have been remarkable whatever the material in which it was painted, and which became doubly interesting from the enlarged capabilities it seemed to offer to the professors of water-colour art. For although this medium had often been employed on works



THE DINING-ROOM



of large scale, it had never been made to yield those qualities of texture and surface which Mr. Herkomer now contrived to secure. How far it will prove permanently acceptable for work of this kind it is as yet impossible to say. Mr. Herkomer has not again repeated the experiment on so large a scale; but he, at any rate, gained such a command of the material as to be able constantly to employ it for the purpose of portrait. In the previous year he had exhibited the likeness of Wagner — a very spirited and dignified example of his skill in this class of work — and he has since executed, in the same medium, portraits of Mr. Tennyson, and Mr. Ruskin.

Mr. Herkomer's more recent performances are fresh in memory. To the Academy of 1880 he made his first important contribution as a painter of landscape. The picture of *God's Shrine* was impressive alike in subject and in treatment, and by the refined quality of the execution it gave evidence of a long and serious



THE DRAWING-ROOM

study of Nature. It was followed, in the present year, by a larger example of the same class, treating of a subject of kindred beauty, selected from the romantic scenery of North Wales. *The Gloom of Idwal*, exhibited in the Grosvenor Gallery, was especially remarkable by reason of the sobriety and strength of imitative power which the artist had bestowed upon it. He has himself given to the public, in the pages of a monthly magazine, an interesting account of his life in Wales during the time he was engaged upon this picture. Mr. Herkomer's usual practice, as a landscape-painter, is to work directly from Nature, carrying his canvas out into the open air, and depending as little as possible upon preliminary sketches and studies. But his preference for the beauty of mountain scenery seemed at first to impose restrictions upon this mode of procedure, for it was obviously impracticable, day after day, to drag a

twelve-foot canvas up and down the steep side of a Welsh hill, and it required the exercise of a little ingenuity to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the difficulty. He could, of course, live under a tent, but he could not paint in a tent, and he therefore designed for himself a portable wooden studio which is so constructed as to enable him to paint upon his picture in full view of his subject. It is remarkable that Mr. Herkomer's landscape, executed in this way, is almost entirely free from the defect of excessive and laboured realism. In *The Gloom of Idwal* for example, where we find a fulness and accuracy of detail that could scarcely be secured by other means, the broad and simple impression of the scene is nevertheless successfully maintained. Perhaps if it were not for the strength and fidelity of the portraiture objection might justly be taken to the scale of the work, for it would of course be possible to present within narrower limits the general effect which the artist has sought to realize. But by attentive study of the different parts of the scene he has been able to give an added interest to his work enriching the broad masses of colour by a careful realization of underlying varieties of tint and tone.

The more popular subject, by which Mr. Herkomer was represented at the Academy, scarcely needs description. If not the most successful, it is perhaps the most difficult, of his several experiments in the rendering of modern sentiment. The crowded composition of men, women and children, pressing eagerly for news of the missing vessel, needed for its perfect control extraordinary powers of complex and intricate design.

In individual faces of the group there was to be found a fine and forcible expression of human feeling; nor were the several actors in the scene mere puppets, created for the utterance of a single emotion, and having no vitality of their own. The permanent varieties of character were firmly grasped and fully realized, so that each separate head had something of the strength and interest of portraiture. But it must be granted,



THE STUDIO

(As it was in July 1881.)

nevertheless, that the purely artistic qualities of the work did not quite reach the level of the painter's invention. In the tone of colouring there was a want of gradation and relief, the foremost figures of the group seemed oppressed and overpowered by those behind them, and the base of the composition appeared scarcely to possess sufficient solidity to support the massive superstructure. But, in spite of these disadvantages, the

picture was eminently impressive and pathetic, it was entirely free from the vices of painful exaggeration, and the force of its appeal was genuinely grounded upon truth.

It remains now only to add a word upon Mr. Herkomer's gifts as an engraver. It is not often that a painter of mark can command either the time or the resource to be his own interpreter. He must content himself with the labours of original production, consigning such of his works as are destined to reach a wider public, to the care and skill of other hands. But Mr. Herkomer's energy is well-nigh inexhaustible, and his versatile talent responds readily to the varied demands he chooses to make upon it. In his case, the use of the etching-needle is not merely a pastime but a craft, and to the practice of etching he has recently added the more arduous employment of mezzo-tint engraving. His work in both kinds is marked by qualities that bring it fairly into competition with the achievement of the professional engraver. A painter's etchings are for the most part slight and suggestive, giving in a few lines, and with little mechanical labour, the record of his own impressions from Nature. But Mr. Herkomer does not care to keep within these limits. He is attracted rather than repelled by the purely mechanical difficulties of his art; and perhaps the most satisfactory and successful of his etchings are those which have the greatest completeness of finish and detail. In the portrait of himself, which accompanies this biographical notice, his talent finds the happiest expression. It is an admirable likeness as well as a most accomplished piece of work, and, as compared with some other plates from his hand, it exhibits a finer sense of executive style. The labour is not spared, but the lines are chosen with so much method and purpose that the result carries no suggestion of fatigue, and we are left convinced, not merely that the artist has secured the effect he desired, but that it could not be attained by simpler or slighter means. The two plates of *The Poacher's Fate* and *The Woodcutters* belong to a different order of workmanship. Here the principal aim has been correctness of interpretation. The painter has sought to reproduce the impression and effect of his own water-colour drawing and has supplemented the resources of pure etching by the addition of mezzo-tint. Such a result could not have been secured by the use of the etching-needle alone, and in deciding to combine deeply bitten lines with the soft tone of the mezzo-tint ground, Mr. Herkomer had the warrant and example of Turner who engraved in this manner the plates of the *Liber Studiorum*. But whatever the merits of this system may be, it cannot be said to exhaust the beauty of either of the two processes which it employs. Having used mezzo-tint as an aid to etching, Mr. Herkomer soon began to feel the charm of the material, and he has lately produced several specimens of mezzo-tint engraving which deserve to rank side by side with the portraits from which they are taken. For it must be known that Mr. Herkomer has quite recently made a new departure in portrait painting. But to discuss the merits of those works, which have yet to be submitted to public judgment, is no part of my task. It has been enough to sketch, however imperfectly, the artist's progress in the past, and to suggest, upon the evidence of what he has already achieved, the probable direction of his future labours.

J. COMYNS CARR.

October, 1888





LAWRENCE ALMA-TADEMA, R.A.

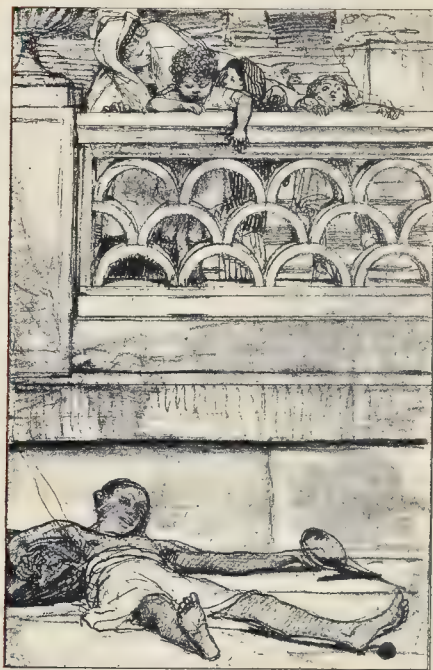






Dronryp, a little village on the flat high-road between the decayed university town of Franeker and Leeuwarden, the capital of the province. His father was the village notary, and the only trace of hereditary inclination to the fine arts is to be found in the person of this father, who was an amateur musician of more than ordinary merit, some of whose compositions found their way into publication. The elder Tadema advanced to be notary of Leeuwarden itself, and when the child was two years old the family moved to their new home. Here life was less definitely Frisian, more normally Dutch. Leeuwarden then retained more of its mediæval character than it preserves to-day, was more like what it had been in the seventeenth century when a stranger, the poet Starter, sang its praises to the music of Jacques Vredeman. In this quietest of country towns the little Lourens grew up among his sturdier brothers, beginning to draw, without encouragement or instruction, and much opposed the

while by bewildered relatives, as early as four years and a half. It was an epoch when some kind relative brought a box of colours back from a visit to Amsterdam. But it was very difficult to guess how these materials ought to be used. Not only was there no art-life of any kind in Leeuwarden, but no one possessed any pictures. Only in one or two of the richer houses to which the boy obtained access were there hanging stately family portraits, mostly by the fashionable portrait-painter of the preceding generation, Van der Kooy. On these cold and ungainly works the little Alma-Tadema founded his first efforts at fine art, and he was encouraged in this imitation by the drawing-master at Leeuwarden, who had been a pupil of Van der Kooy, and who instructed those who attended his languid classes in the use of the pencil as directed by that master. In this style Alma-Tadema developed his first pictures, a portrait of his sister, which is now in Puerto Rico, painted in 1849, and one of himself, two years later, which is in his own possession. This latter is a notable production for a self-trained boy of fifteen, ugly and gauche enough, of course, but displaying already the germs of that brilliant reproduction of surfaces which has marked the painter's mature work.



A. H. 1849

(Drawn by L. Alma-Tadema, R.A.)

early proficiency and the tendency which his talent took in starting, to the successive purchase of two books. In a book-shop in Leeuwarden, when he was still a schoolboy, he picked up a copy of a Dutch translation of Leonardo da Vinci's treatise on the art of painting, and he set himself at once to follow the first lesson, in order to learn how the art-student has to begin in studying perspective. He then procured himself an excellent treatise of the seventeenth century on the rules of perspective, and of this the boy made himself absolute master, literally learning by heart every page of the little volume, and carrying out by hand every proposition to which a diagram might possibly be appended. To this admirable early training, so much the more admirable because self-imposed, the painter now attributes that aptitude for the details of architectural proportion, which has become a second sense to him, and in which imagination and science are so happily

blended. By this time he was approaching the age of sixteen, and though his still-life studies and his portraits were remarkable enough to excite surprise in the little provincial town, he would hardly have been allowed to pursue art as a profession if the family doctor had not stepped in with a prophecy that he had not long to live. It was determined that he should be left in peace to follow the bent of his mind so long as he could. An attempt was made to find a place for him in one of the Amsterdam studios, but no one wanted a Frisian pupil, and at last it was arranged that he should go and try his fortune in the schools at Antwerp.

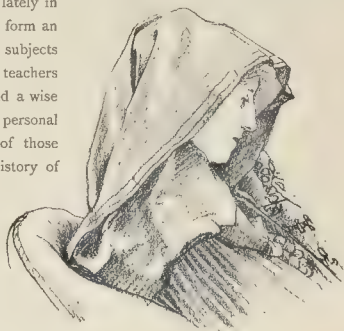
To any ambitious youth the change of life from a provincial town to one of the centres of artistic influence in Europe would have been a momentous one. To Alma-Tadema it involved an absolute revelation of the principles of fine art and of the direction of modern practice. The Royal Academy at Antwerp is one of the few institutions of the kind which can boast anything like the prestige of antiquity. It claims to be the continuation, the lineal successor, of that famous Guild of St. Luke founded by the Burgundian Dukes in the middle of the fifteenth century, and afterwards supported by rich endowments from the kings of Spain. Rubens, Vandyck, and Teniers were famous members of this Guild, and the glory which they bequeathed to Antwerp survived long generations of decline and decay. When Alma-Tadema came to Antwerp in 1852 it was once more the centre of a great artistic activity, though certainly of an influence far more limited and local than in the palmy days of the Guild. The principles of romanticism had just been universally accepted by the leaders of taste, and the circle which had been two centuries in making was at last complete. Vandyck, when he came to settle in England in 1632, brought with him the traditions of nature and realism from the Low Countries. In the eighteenth century it was Reynolds and Gainsborough who sustained these traditions when art in every other part of Europe had become enslaved to Italian grace and pseudo-classical ideality. It was from Holland that our great landscape-painters, our Cromes and Constables, were led to study nature still more conscientiously and fervently, and it was Lawrence who first impressed on the attention of France the fact that in England the methods of Vandyck were still in practice. A little later Bonington became the actual pioneer of the English school in France, and before his early death had been accepted as a French painter and the master of a new school; and then, in the persons of Géricault and Delacroix the French themselves began to adopt in its fullest sense the romantic attitude towards nature. But Antwerp all this time, Antwerp from which the romantic tradition had originally gone forth, was almost uninfluenced by French art of the Restoration. In the Académie des Beaux Arts the professors remained for another decade in servile discipleship to the formulas and cold abstractions of David. Then at last, in the forties, Antwerp also received the leaven of romanticism, and when Alma-Tadema arrived there a few years later, the struggle was over, the classicists had ceased to resist, and the director of the Academy, or Dean of the Guild, as he would have been called in the days of Rubens, was



TESSELSCHADE VISSCHER AT ALKMAAR (Drawn by L. Alma-Tadema, R.A.).

Wappers, a thorough romanticist, for whom all that was fruitful and modern was included in the name of Bonington.

Under the tutelage of Wappers, then, and in the full tide of romanticism, Alma-Tadema began his serious study of painting; and looking forward at the class of subjects which has mainly occupied his pencil, we cannot be too glad that so careful a draughtsman, so disciplined a mind, was not at the beginning warped in the least by that traditional view of classical life that had been so lately in vogue in Italy and France. He was left absolutely free to form an unbiassed conception of the mode in which any class of subjects should be approached mentally, the only laws insisted on by teachers of the romantic school being those of fidelity to nature and a wise selection of her phenomena. He hardly came at all into personal relations with Wappers, a respectable historical painter of those times, who has not left a very prominent mark on the history of Flemish art, and who retired from the directorship of the Academy the following year. It was an artist better known in England, Joseph Laurens Dyckmanns, the professor of painting in the Royal Academy, under whose more direct training the young Frisian student next advanced. Dyckmanns, then in the prime of life, had attained great reputation as a genre-painter, producing at considerable intervals small canvases in which every detail of texture or surface was rendered with extraordinary dexterity. His ideal in art was perhaps narrowed too closely to this excessive technical perfection, of which his own *Blind Beggar*, in our National Gallery, is a rather painful specimen. But, on the whole, the influence of Dyckmanns on a student of Alma-Tadema's intellectual ambition cannot have failed to be salutary. Perhaps he hardly realises at the present day how much of his bias towards perfection of technique he may not owe to the instructions of Professor Dyckmanns, whose ambition and pride at once it was to be spoken of as "the Belgian Gerhard Douw."



Facsimile from the Artist's Sketch-Book



Facsimile from the Artist's Sketch-Book

Under prosaic but wholesome training of this sort, Alma-Tadema continued to advance as a student, but without attempting to paint pictures, until his twentieth year. Meanwhile he had been drawn more and more to the study of the classics and impelled to let his imagination rest on the details of bygone days. In 1855 he became acquainted with De Taye, the professor of archaeology at Antwerp, was received by him into his house as a lodger, and began henceforth to be a practical artist. From De Taye, whom he assisted for three years in the painting of his pictures, he received all that the conversation and the library of a learned antiquarian could supply him with, but it was not as a painter of classical antiquity that Alma-Tadema made his *début*. His first finished picture must have been in the Dyckmanns manner; it was a *Poacher returning Home*, exhibited in 1856, and followed in 1857 by a large subject from Dutch history, *The Inundation of the Biesbosch*, in 1861. In 1858 Alma-Tadema painted the first of his studies in the social aspect of antique civilisations; he had been studying with De Taye the results of recent archaeology in Egypt, and he resolved to attempt to reconstruct one of the scenes of Egyptian society. As the first of a series of Egyptian pictures, some of which are to be counted among the highest expressions of Alma-Tadema's genius, *The Unfavourable Oracle* is a work of great interest. It is a large composition in oils, and is in the possession of the writer of these pages; it has been, however, I am sorry to say, hopelessly injured. Enough, however, is preserved to show the style and colouring to which the young painter had attained in his twenty-



third year. The child of a Pharaoh is sick to death, and a procession of priests and maidens has filed to the temple of Isis to consult the Oracle. The answer is fatal to their happiness, and they return to break the miserable tidings to the parents. Some girls seated, and playing upon tall stringed instruments, the central group of women clinging to the high priest, the patient figure of the king—all these are sufficiently well preserved to show great solidity of painting and some richness of colour, with a somewhat academic but very correct characterization of the human body in perspective. Another large picture of the same year, *The Destruction of the Abbey of Ter Doest*, which attracted some notice at the exhibition at Brussels in 1857, would seem, from some studies for it which I have looked at, to have partaken of the same romantic manner. In these early works, which have never been publicly seen since the painter attained eminence, there appears to have been none of the brilliance of detail and beauty of light for which his mature pictures have been pre-eminent: these qualities do not seem to have yet occurred to his ambition.

The following year, 1858, brought about the event which is always "epoch-making" to a young painter—the sale of his first picture. It was a *Clotilde weeping over the Tomb of her Grandchildren*, a subject of a thoroughly romantic cast, which enjoyed this distinction. In this Alma-Tadema for the first time availed himself of a source of inspiration to which he has often since returned—the famous history of the Gauls, by St. Gregory of Tours. The next few years of the young painter's career were marked by little else than hard work and continued disappointment. Several large subjects from the mediæval history of Flanders failed to find buyers, and were ruthlessly pumice-stoned down after exhibition, by the indignant artist. In 1860, in his twenty-fifth year, he began for the first time to taste a little success. The most illustrious Belgian painter of the age, Baron H. Leys, was painting important works at Antwerp, and required in his studio some pupil who had a competent knowledge of architectural perspective. Among others, Alma-Tadema was introduced to him by the professors, and after a few experiments it was found that the young Frisian was the only one who possessed skill and knowledge enough to be really serviceable. Alma-Tadema thereupon became Leys' pupil, and it was the influence and sympathy of this great man that gave impetus to his pupil's mind. The earliest of Alma-Tadema's works which is at all known at present to the public is his *Education of the Grandchildren of Clovis*, now in the Palais du Roi at Brussels. It is a work which displays to us an artist in whom

a strong originality in composition and still more in architectural decoration is struggling with a tendency to follow the tradition of his master, Leys, in the treatment of the figure. The group of courtiers behind the Queen, with their deep red robes, might have been painted by Leys. There was, however, quite enough in the technical dexterity of the picture to attract general attention to the artist. For the first time he became recognised outside Antwerp. There was an artistic congress in that town in 1861, and it was among the German painters especially that the name of Alma-Tadema began to pass from mouth to mouth.

He was now twenty-five, and he had hitherto never set foot outside the Low Countries. He had observed, as a very young man, that the clever youths who go about travelling for the study of fine art usually come



Facsimile from the Artist's Sketch Book

back more disturbed in their views and aims than they were before, and when he was offered an opportunity of visiting Germany and Italy, he declined to avail himself of it. But in 1861, after his *Education of the Grandchildren of Clovis*, feeling that he had found his own path, he felt the need of a fresh outlook upon art life, and his first journey was to the national German exhibition at Cologne, where the golden Gothic pictures of the nameless masters of the fifteenth century strongly impressed him by their Byzantine magnificence. It was on his return that he painted his next Merovingian picture, *Venantius Fortunatus*, 1862, a charming work now in the Museum at Dordrecht. In the same year he finished and exhibited at Rotterdam a very clever canvas in a somewhat similar style, his romantic *Guntram Bose*, in which the influence of Leys upon his style reaches its climax. In that year he paid his first visit to London, coming with no introductions in his pocket, save a letter to Mr. Calderon, who was from home. Notwithstanding these solitary circumstances, under which London seems terribly inhospitable to most foreigners, Alma-Tadema was enchanted with our city; and the bright impression of this early visit had much to do with his final determination to settle in England. In 1863 he painted his celebrated picture, *How the Egyptians amused Themselves 3,000 Years ago*, and in the winter of that year he set out for Italy. In 1859 his mother and sister had left Leeuwarden and had come to live with him, and in the early part of 1863 the former died. It was with a young French lady whom he had just made his wife that Alma-Tadema took that first journey to Italy which must always be momentous in the career of a young painter.

For some time it was the Byzantine remains alone that had any fascination for him in Italy; and in modern Rome the antique life remained obstinately dark to him. It was not till he went to Pompeii that the real Roman charm became revealed to him; he woke from his torpor into enthusiasm there, and lingered among those richly-coloured ruins, studying and sketching, until his money was exhausted and it was imperatively necessary to get back to Antwerp as quickly as possible. At Paris, in the Salon of 1864, his *How the Egyptians amused Themselves* produced a considerable sensation. A gold medal was awarded to the new Belgian painter, and among the artists Mdlle. Rosa Bonheur was prominent in predicting a great future to this original and brilliant craftsman. All this was gratifying, but praise brings no grist to the mill. While the young painter was thus making a reputation, he was obliged, for a bare livelihood, to sacrifice his best hours to work of a purely secondary kind. Alma-Tadema painted, in 1864, one of the most notable of his Merovingian pictures, the *Fredgonde and Prætextatus*, in which for the first time he was subdued by the charm of that famous Queen Fredegonde whom he has made almost as much part and parcel of his reputation as Mr. Swinburne has Queen Mary of Scots. In this work, moreover, we note for the first time that fine intellectual sense of the contest of the Teutonic with the Roman spirit which no careful student of the painter's mind can omit to see has possessed an unfailing fascination for him. By this time, through the exhaustion of his private fortune, his chances in life began to look a little desperate. Once more, as so often in the history of the world, accident stepped in and proved herself to be the fairy-godmother of self-help.

In 1864 he visited Paris for the first time. He had on that occasion an opportunity of making the acquaintance of Gerôme and Alfred Stevens, but it was Rosa Bonheur, whom he has never yet seen, who told her friends that they ought to keep their eyes upon him. She spoke of him to M. Gambart, the picture-dealer, who was induced, by an accident it is said, to visit Alma-Tadema's studio, and was so much delighted with his work, that he ordered from him twenty-four pictures, to be paid for at low but ascending prices. The only stipulation which the painter made was that half of them, at least, might be antique. In process of time the picture-dealer assured himself that it was in depicting ancient society that the painter found his true vocation; and although the world of his buyers had to be educated very laboriously into so much archæology, he was forced to waive his claim to modern or Gothic subjects, and left the artist perfectly free to follow the bent of his genius. Although the sum which the artist received for each of these pictures did not exceed one-fifteenth of what any one of them easily commands if it now finds its way back into the market, this regular and certain income had the great advantage of removing that sense of carking anxiety which is the severest burden and check to an imaginative nature. In 1865 Alma-Tadema left Antwerp to settle in Brussels, and he exchanged those Merovingian and Egyptian subjects which had hitherto principally occupied him, for the scenes out of Imperial Rome by which he is most popularly known.

The pictures of Alma-Tadema's Antwerp period, and those which he has painted since, are distinct enough in style to be supposed the work of two separate artists, similar, of course, in aim, but opposite in treatment. If



FIGURE III. 10. HENRY VIII.





any one characteristic more than another may be said to make itself felt now, and ever since 1868, in Alma-Tadema's painting, it is the extraordinary fondness for a play of whites, a determination to obtain harmonies in the brightest possible key. It will be seen on a moment's reflection that his most eminent successes, such as *The Vintage*, *The Question*, *The Audience at Agrippa's*, and *Sappho* are pictures in which white forms the basis, and in which the tone is kept extremely high throughout. This peculiarity marks the point at which he suddenly broke away from the academic training of Dyckmanns and from the gloom and mystery of Leys. His first important Merovingian picture, the *Clotilde at the Tomb of her Grandchildren*, of 1858, was light in tone; it was painted in the bright, pale studio of De Taye. But when Alma-Tadema in the following year took a studio for himself, he was full of enthusiasm for dark ornament and barbaric splendour of colour, and he tinted his walls with Pompeian ornament on a ground of red and black. He saw everything in a warm and dusky



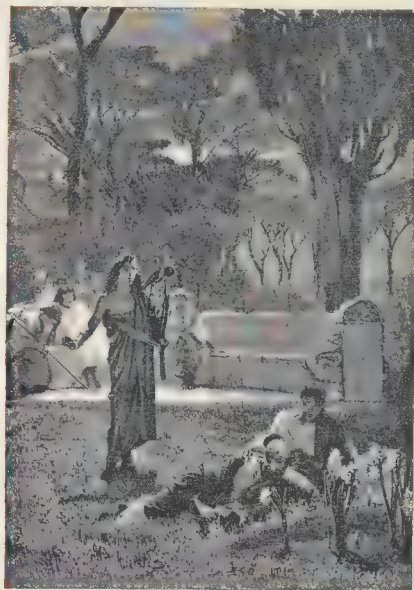
AT LESBIA'S (Engraved by W. Hecht, after L. Alma-Tadema, R.A.).

shadow, and he did not shrink from the hot tones of his *Egyptians 3,000 Years ago*, with its harshly-coloured architecture. When he went over to Brussels he began by taking a dark studio, and the result is to be seen in the deep tones of the *Catullus at Lesbia's* and *The Mummy*. He became himself aware of the error into which he had fallen, and in 1868 he deliberately repainted his studio in white and pale green before beginning to work on the *Pyrrhic Dance*, which is the first of his modern works, and which displays a startling contrast to his previous combinations of brown and fuscous tones.

His first Brussels picture was also his earliest purely Roman work, the *Catullus at Lesbia's* of 1865. In this conception of antique life a new thing was added to our sum of intellectual pleasure. No one hitherto had attempted to bring this intimate and personal sentiment into our dreams of the past. Europe had wearied herself in all her schools for centuries to record in modern art her conceptions of antiquity. The poets, painters, and sculptors of the Renaissance had strenuously set themselves to revive the heroic phases of ancient life and thought; their desire had been to make again such tragedies as those of Æschylus, such statues as those of Pheidias, and their conception of life had been taken from the two most violent extremes of classical literature, the philosophy of early Greece, and the comic poetry of later Rome. Far as they were, however, from the reality of antique life, they seemed near indeed in comparison with the academic and pedantic schools which followed them. A certain cold grace of line, a nerveless and practically meaningless composition, a dismal coloration from which all true colour had been excluded, these came to be the characteristics with which the idea of what was "classical" was identified. Certain poets of the romantic revival, Goethe, for instance, and to a still larger

measure Keats, perceived the falseness of all this, and set themselves to conceive antiquity as it had truly been; but these men concentrated themselves mainly upon idyllic or heroic themes, and avoided the prose of ancient life, the antique city with its home, its market-place, its theatre, its religious ceremonies. It is, perhaps, likely that an artist from the south, a scion of the Latin races to whom the gift of grace had descended through a long degenerate ancestry, could never have recovered this realistic mode of contemplating antiquity, a mode which has already become, in less than twenty years, so common that we cease to regard it with surprise. It was proper that a Dutchman, a member of the race given more than any other to the study of what is domestically luxurious, the race in which attention to detail is a second nature—it was proper that Alma-Tadema, with his archaeological science, and his passion for minute and exact drawing, should be the first to reveal to us the fact that Romans were after all such men as we, although they wore *fallia* and *chlamydes* instead of coats and waistcoats. The *Catullus at Lesbia's* was in some respects a timid rendering of the antique life as Alma-Tadema has imagined it, and as he has since so courageously painted it. To incline his audience to hear the new delivery, he has occupied himself in it with one of the most sentimental and attractive subjects in Latin literature. The tender love of the poet of Verona for the charming mistress who gave him so much pain had always been a stock theme with sculptors and painters. But Alma-Tadema gives a totally new version of it, and his novelty of treatment proceeds in two directions. On archaeological detail he expends all his learning and all his powers of conjectural reconstruction; in this direction he is as exact and particular as the classic school had been lax and vague. In human sentiment, on the other

hand, in all that part of the theme which had traditionally been given up to a false sense of dignity and conventionality, he throws all such convention to the winds. In a richly-furnished house, such as we may imagine that of her brother Clodius to have been, the frivolous Lesbia entertains her male friends. An urn of wine stands on the table, with silver cups and wreaths of roses. Lesbia lounges on a couch, below a stately marble bust of herself, and her eyes, heavy with weeping, are turned towards the young poet who stands beside her, and tenderly holds out in the palm of his hand the famous sparrow (*passer, delicia mea puellae*), which he has made immortal in his verse. The other two men seem to express a courteous sympathy, but to see nothing of the flash of tenderness which passes between Lesbia and Catullus, her upward look through her tears into her lover's face. It must at the same time be admitted that, with all this intellectual ambition and novelty of purpose, there still remained considerable executive shortcoming. To a painter of Alma-Tadema's thoroughness, the shifting grace and expressional beauty of the human figure is the last thing mastered. In *Catullus at Lesbia's*, with the exception of the elder man



THE IMPROVISATORE  
(Engraved by A. Gloss, after L. Alma-Tadema, R.A.).

with his hands crossed and clasping his ankle, none of the figures are quite worthy of the bronze and marble, the flowers and the textures. These Belgian pictures of his are marred by a certain Batavian squatness and heaviness in the human forms, and it was not till five or six years later that he began to display his mastery of the surface of living skin.



Meanwhile, these were years of development, and we see him becoming less and less influenced by the genius of Leys. His last picture at Antwerp had been an admirable Egyptian subject, a handsome young priest, in an attitude of dejection, leaning against one pillar of the doorway of his house. This work, *Comme l'on s'ennuyait* in Egypt 3,000 years ago, was one of Alma-Tadema's most luminous creations; and in style may be said to belong more to his Brussels manner. The audacity with which the elaborately-plaited hair and bronzed face of the youth were projected against the gloom of a palm-tree's foliage, and with which the full sunlight was allowed to fall on his snow-white robe, were as astonishing from a painter's point of view, as to the general spectator was the completeness with which the scene, unfamiliar to its minutest details, had stamped itself upon the artist's imagination. Another remarkable work, painted somewhat later in the same year, was *The Soldier of Marathon*. In this Alma-Tadema, for the first time, attempted to add ancient Greece to the provinces of his conquest. It has never been admitted, and we are not disposed to contend, that he has realised the life of Greece with so much apparent verisimilitude as he has reconstructed those of Egypt, Rome, and Gaul. The magic of Greece, the purely lyrical and, if we may so say, eclectic character of Greek civilisation requires, it



ENTRANCE TO A ROMAN THEATRE.

may be, a lighter hand; we crave for it a taste more vigorously denuded of what is barbaric. *The Soldier of Marathon* is charming, but not particularly convincing. The young hero, with his greaves still on his legs, sits with a beaker of wine in his hand, and vivaciously describes the incidents of the campaign to his mother and sister. In 1866 the artist turned his attention rather to oddities of antique life than to the essentials of his art. It cannot be denied that about this time he threatened to become a mere pedant of the brush, an archæologist too quaintly learned to interest the general public. *The Entrance to a Roman Theatre* is an odd rather than a pleasing picture, while *Agrippina visiting the Ashes of Germanicus* is chiefly interesting because of the type which the painter has adopted for his imperial beauty. The Empress is a large woman, stretched on a couch in the Columbaria, where she has gone to remove the last year's wreath, on the anniversary of the death; and she regards the dust of her great husband without any expression save that of dignified apathy upon her large Flavian mask. Alma-Tadema paints her as "visiting" the ashes of Germanicus; but it is strange that he has never chosen, as the subject of one of his later and more dramatic compositions, that landing of the noble widow at Brindisi, of which Tacitus has given so thrilling an account in the opening of the third book of his

"Annals." We must, however, not forget to note in this picture of 1866 the first appearance of that heavy feminine profile which no expostulations of his critics and no bewilderment of the public have quite succeeded in weaning him from. That it is correct, and that such was the type of the women of that sensual family, is very probable; that it is beautiful in art, unless painted with extreme refinement, can scarcely be admitted.

We have spoken of the perplexity of the public. This perplexity began to weigh a little heavily on M. Gambart, who found it impossible to induce his clients to become the possessors of works so startling and abstruse. One rich amateur, on whom a brilliant specimen of Alma-Tadema was urged by the dealer, answered, "You see, if you explain to me what it is all about, I shall only forget: and a man looks such a fool if he can't

explain the subject of his own pictures to his friends." It was in consequence of a series of such answers as this that the picture-dealer at last lost patience to some degree, and begged the artist to allow a few of his pictures at least to be modern and European. With a heavy heart Alma-Tadema closed his *Martial* and his *Petronius*, and tried his best to be pleasing and domestic, like the others. But M. Gambart was a man of taste and acumen, and after a couple of these efforts in a new *genre* had reached him, he promptly confessed that he was wrong, and begged the painter to follow the bent of his own genius undisturbed, and to compose whatever wild scene of antique life his imagination led him to dwell upon. The lesson so gently given was not without its instant fruit. Alma-Tadema flew back with delight to his favourite themes, but never after this without some consideration of the intelligibility and popular value of his researches into archæology. He was painting with great inequality in 1867, a year which saw the production of a work so hard and muddy in colour



MY CHILDREN  
(Engraved by L. Lowndes after J. Alma-Tadema, R.A.)

as *The Mummy*, and of so admirable a masterpiece as the *Tarquinius Superbus*. This latter was, and deserved to be, a great success. The messengers from the leaguered city of Gabii present to the Roman king in his garden the message of Sextus, to return a spoken answer to which would be to betray a state-secret, and they gaze with astonishment at the grave Roman who seems to pay no heed to them, but continues to strike off the tallest poppy-heads with his stick. The head of *Tarquinius* was superbly painted, though perhaps it was made a little too youthful for the details of the legend; while the masses of tall poppies in the foreground were put in as flowers had scarcely been drawn in Europe since the art of Holland sank in the beautiful flower-pieces of the Van Huysums. This picture is worthy of special note in the chronicle of Alma-Tadema's successes; it marked another step in the upward course of his career.

The light which this painter has thrown on the daily habits of the ancients, on their toilets, their meals, their domestic arrangements and their festal ordinances—this has probably done more than anything else to endear him to the general public. His little *genre* pictures of this class have become exceedingly numerous, and include some of the brightest and sweetest of his work. He may almost be said to have inaugurated this class of painting with his *Siesta* of 1868, in which a *tibicina*, or female flute-player, is seen playing her double pipes by the side of a table, along which two men are lounging in that curious attitude which the ancient Greeks and Romans thought fit to adopt when they were eating. Opposite the flute-player, among the cups and roses on the table, is an exquisite little silver statuette of *Aphrodite*, and this is probably the earliest nude figure to be found among his works. The same year 1868 was very rich in specimens of Alma-Tadema's work. He painted and exhibited the *Parthenon*, which represented *Pheidias* on a scaffolding, showing his friends the carving and colouring of the *Panathenaic frieze* of cavalry before the scaffolding was taken down. Of all his antiquarian studies, this is the one which has provoked most controversy; a certain school of archæologists declining to

believe that the reliefs were worked in this particular manner, or were so crudely coloured. In *Flowers* and in *A Roman Flower Market* he progressed still further in his marvellous manipulation of leaves and petals; the second of these pictures giving us also a singularly novel idea of the streets of Imperial Rome, with the advertisements at the corners, and the picturesque scribbles on the whitened walls. *A Roman Amateur*, also of 1868, was the first conception of a subject which has again and again returned to Alma-Tadema's mind, and has been reproduced or rather developed a dozen times. In this earliest form it takes the shape of a group of guests surrounding the high couch of a Roman gentleman, who displays to them a silver statuette on a pedestal, the latest addition to the art-treasures of his house. The palace itself presents a forest of green pillars to the spectator, and a mass of marble which is painted with the artist's customary felicity. But the figures do not stand easily in their voluminous robes, and they have a stunted look; what is worse than this, they lack interest and animation, and the connoisseur shows no sign of being charmed with his treasure. It was plain that this composition could not satisfy its critical creator. He improved upon it with his second *Amateur* of 1870, and the idea has developed in his hands, and has branched out into such brilliant later works as *The Sculptor's Studio*, *The Painter's Studio*, and *Architecture*. It has been characteristic of Alma-Tadema that he has never shown that satisfaction with his successful paintings which is the bane of little men. He has but seldom consented to paint replicas of his work; when he has begun to do so under pressure, some new idea, some fresh fact, some happy accident of nature beneath his eyes, has always led him on to novelties of treatment and a development of the theme.

The close of his career in Brussels brings us more and more into the range of works which have been exhibited in England and are more or less familiar to all students of art. It was from Belgium that he first sent to our Royal Academy of 1869 two pictures which created a sensation over here, the *Roman Amateur* just described, and the marvellous *Pyrrhic Dance*, with its matchless originality and ingenuity, its strange brightness of tone, and its wonderful insight into ancient custom. Another very curious and powerful picture of 1869 is the *Roman Wine Shop*, hitherto not exhibited in England. In the early part of this year, Madame Alma-Tadema died, and the painter began to feel himself ill at ease in Brussels. In the winter he came over to London to consult Sir Henry Thompson, and during this visit he made his studies for the composition of his large picture, *The Vintage*.

This picture was finished in Brussels in 1870, and was the last and crowning effort of his life in Belgium. Had his career now closed, it would not have enjoyed the brilliance or secured the full development of genius which have resulted from the labours of the last twelve years, but it would have been sufficiently remarkable to have preserved the painter's name in the history of Fine Art. *The Vintage*, though somewhat coldly received in France in 1872, surprised the critics of Germany and England into



THE SIDE ENTRANCE TO TOWNSHEND HOUSE.



expressions of unbounded admiration. Alma-Tadema had never before received such warm ovations from the press.

The year 1869 completely disorganised the painter's existence. As we have seen, he found in the winter that London was hospitable and that it suited his convenience. Nevertheless, he had no definite thought of



THE DINING-ROOM

settling in England; on the contrary, he had made all initial preparations for having a house built for him in Paris, when the war between France and Germany broke out. There was no longer any career for a painter in the north of Europe, at least for the time being; Brussels had become intolerable for him, and Paris impossible. In October, 1870, Alma-Tadema and his only sister, who a few years afterwards died in the West Indies, came over

to London to settle, and he has been a resident Englishman ever since. At first he rented of Mr. Goodall, R.A., a house and studio in Camden Square; but in 1871, on his second marriage, he took the house on the north side of Regent's Park in which he has lived ever since, and which he may be said to have made one of the most famous private dwellings of our time. It owes this celebrity not only to the beauty and strangeness of its



71. South.

THE DRAWING ROOM.

contents, but also in no small degree to the singular and terrible accident which befell it in 1874. The artist had spent three years on its decoration, elaborately painting his studio with Pompeian arabesques, and filling every room with the treasures of ancient glass, rare blue and white china, Japanese curios, and all the precious things which he had amassed in a lifetime of patient research. The house had hardly been seen by the wider

circle of his friends; it stood on the tip-toe of completion, when the whole effect was shattered like a bubble. Mr. and Mrs. Alma-Tadema happened, by one of the many strokes of good fortune which attended the accident, to be travelling in Scotland. On the night of the 2nd of October, at about 5 A.M., the whole of London was aroused by a tremendous crash, which made itself sharply felt far out into the provinces. At Townshend House, the painter's newly finished dwelling, the two young children were awakened in the darkness by a roar of sound, and discovered that the entire window was lying on their bed. Happily neither they, nor their governess, nor the servants were seriously hurt; and when the gas had been turned off at the meter, and a few candles had been lighted, they were able to look round upon the wreck of their possessions with some fortitude, and a good deal of congratulation at their own escape. All the windows and doors in the house, however, were blown in, or out, as the case might be, and the ruin of all breakable objects was complete. It afterwards appeared that a barge laden with gunpowder and benzoline had passed along the Regent's Park Canal at that hour, and it is supposed that the evaporation of the benzoline coming in contact with a lamp in the cabin caused a small explosion under the dry tarpauling of the cabin, and that the powder was thus set on fire. Of this barge, however, nothing more was ever seen, except a fragment, with a piece of rope attached, which was found on the roof of Alma-Tadema's house, and which is now preserved in his studio as a trophy of the siege. The appearance of the house and its neighbours, for a long time after the accident, completely justified the word just used; they looked as though they had been persistently and successfully shelled.

Mr. Alma-Tadema was on the spot before nightfall, and gathered his household gods as well and as promptly around him as he could. It was a question for some time whether the very skeleton of the house was not too hopelessly shattered for restoration, but under the skilful care of Mr. George Aitchison, A.R.A., it was bound with iron girders, and at last pronounced to be safe. Then the labour of decoration had to begin again, and it was not until a very few years ago that it finally presented that gorgeous succession of delicately-furnished chambers, in each of which some phase of Roman, Oriental, or Renaissance splendour has been conscientiously reproduced. In connection with the explosion of 1874, a curious parallel was at the time drawn by some critics in Holland between that comparatively harmless accident, and the similar one which cost the life of so many Dutch citizens, and among them of the famous painter Fabricius, in 1674. Fabricius was painting the portrait of a gentleman in his studio at Delft, when a barge, loaded with gunpowder, blew up in the canal opposite his house, and neither he nor his sitter was ever seen again. The English explosion was certainly better managed than this; it could have occurred at no hour of the day or night at which there was less likelihood of loss of life; and, in point of fact, in spite of rumours to the contrary, it is believed that no one was killed but the bargeman whose carelessness must have produced the accident.

It would be a long and a weary task to recapitulate the multitude of works by which Alma-Tadema has been represented at the Royal Academy, at the Salon, and at the Grosvenor Gallery, during the last ten years. A few of the most notable must be briefly reviewed, to complete the historical character of this sketch of his career. *The Discovery of the Emperor Claudius* by the mob of Roman soldiery was painted in 1871, and may, perhaps, be taken as being the highest expression of his art from its historical side, up to the present moment. This picture has a solemnity, a tragic force, which have not been frequent in an artist who loves best, after all, to be idyllic and domestic. A great improvement in the colour of this picture was noticeable at once; and from this time he threw off the last remains of his conventional Belgian tones. *The Death of the First-born* was the principal achievement of 1872, and still remains the noblest of his Egyptian pictures—a startling and fascinating conception, carried out with unflinching realism, and under all the panoply of archaeological learning. In the same category must be mentioned the *Joseph, Overseer of Pharaoh's Granaries* (1873), an amazing *tour de force*, which seemed grotesque and almost a little profane to good people nourished on the conventional treatment of sacred subjects in art. The present writer must confess to a personal feeling, which he is afraid would hardly be supported by popular suffrage, in favour of Alma-Tadema's Egyptian pictures over all else that he has done. In this section of his art, it seems to us, he becomes absolutely and not comparatively free from all reminiscence of modern life, and projects his imagination without the least reserve on the astonishing civilisation which he is reconstructing. It may be that he realises his African scenes all the better because he has never been distracted by a visit to the actual modern Egypt.

We have said nothing of Alma-Tadema's proficiency in water-colour painting, but this is a branch of his art which he has very sedulously practised since he settled in England, and the earliest Academic honour which was



conferred on him in London was the membership of the Society of Painters in Water Colours in 1873. His method is very curious, and if there were any value in the public discussion of methods, might delay us long. He taught himself by copying in this medium a collection of exquisite drawings of flowers, by Elkema, an obscure



THE DRAWING-ROOM.

Frisian painter, who died in 1823, and who is but too completely forgotten. It is to be noted in this connection, as a fact generally overlooked in the history of Art, that when water-colour was despised and abandoned in every other part of Europe, but particularly in France, it was still quietly practised by the best professional artists in Holland. So that, when we talk of the medium as one reinvented in England by such men as Paul Sandby and

Cosens, we use an erroneous expression, and should say reintroduced into the general tradition of Europe. Elkema was one of these proficient in water-colour at a time when it was hardly permitted to exist out of Holland. Alma-Tadema's first exhibited water-colour picture was the *Faust and Marguerite*, in 1857. At this time, and for the whole of his student career, he was the only student who worked in this bitterly-despised branch of painting.

Among his later pictures, the *Audience at Agrippa's*, of 1876, and the *Question*, of 1880, have been especial



THE DRAWING-ROOM

favourites with that class of critics who demand from Alma-Tadema, before anything else, broad surfaces of marble painted as only he knows how to paint them. The merits of these particular works, however, are much more apparent than such a sentence would imply. They are typical instances of that marvellous power of sunlight, that bath of deep Italian air, which he has at last contrived to develop. In these later masterpieces of the artist, as Mr. Hamerton has admirably said, "the most careful study of antiquarian detail is united to an artist's vivid recollection of the colour and sunshine of the south; so that his Romans are not only dressed in their own costumes, and surrounded by their own things, but they live in Italian light and breathe Italian air." He has, moreover, developed a delightful power over the figure, as seen in the strong light of midday—a power which is singularly rare even among artists of real talent, whose nude figures are apt to look coarse or transparent, as if crudely seen by gaslight or dimly shadowed in twilight. Not among the least of Alma-Tadema's later successes must be considered his magnificent *Sleeping Bacchante*, his still more refined and real *Sculptor's Model for the Venus Esquilina*, of 1878, and the lovely little compositions of Roman women bathing, with which he has de-

lighted us since 1879. In all of these he has given the luminosity of skin under sunlight as it has very rarely been given by a Northern painter. It is in these beautiful studies in the nude that we feel almost more than anywhere else what a gulf divides his realistic prose from the poetic enchantment of the Italians. His Roman maidens in the bath have nothing in tone or sentiment to proclaim their most distant kinship with the glowing nymphs that star the grass in the idyls of the school of Giorgione. It may be said, in passing, that Paolo Veronese is the only great Italian with whom Alma-Tadema can be found to have any relation.

In pure landscape Alma-Tadema has performed some remarkable feats, which have remained almost unnoticed. The landscape of professional figure-painters is often exceedingly interesting, although it rarely attracts public attention. It is perhaps a general rule that it is treated with a severity of drawing which is foreign to the sentimental vagueness of the professional *paysagiste*. Alma-Tadema is singularly obtuse, at least in his paintings, to the charms of atmospheric illusion. His skies are always radiantly blue and cloudless, and if he paints a strip of sea, it is an almost conventional line of burning sapphire, beneath the lighter azure of the heaven. No mist or vapour reduces the intense and rectilinear shadow which his walls and trees throw from the

sun, and we cannot at this moment recollect a single example of his art in which the weather is not brilliant enough to suit the constitution of a lizard or a cat. With this intense and searching light upon his canvas, it is extraordinary that he finds time and patience to paint his foliage and flowerage with such wonderful minuteness; in this respect, in solidity of flower and leaf painting under strong light, it may be doubted whether he has ever found his equal. His few landscapes into which no figures or architectural details are introduced, are noticeable for their vivid truth and severity; they have none of the traditional charm of English landscape, but a certain vigorous novelty that demands respect.

In many respects Alma-Tadema may be considered the living painter of Europe who throws the fullest amount of labour, and telling labour, into the technical part of his work. His exquisite finish, the tireless striving after perfection, the consideration of his theme from all sides, and of the possibilities of fine art to render it—these are rewarded by a sureness of hand and a vitality of touch which seem hardly to belong to our age of



THE LIBRARY.

hasty impressions and rough workmanship. He combines, in a manner which would seem impossible to any one who had not seen his best paintings, the patience of the miniaturist and the agility of the Japanese metal-chaser, with a power to cover broad spaces of canvas and to express the large emotions of mankind. His light, as we have already remarked, is the air of Italy itself; his colour improves almost year by year, and his design, which was always just, has now added grace to its accuracy. It has been said that he is not an easy theme for an exercise of the critical faculty; and this is true, for his very perfection baffles the analyst. To criticise his archæology, we need to be ranked among the best masters of that science in Europe; to discuss his painting, we ought to be able to handle the brush in his own heroic way; there are no veils to be undrawn, no mysteries to be explained, no arcane wonders into which we must be initiated, to appreciate this vivid, practical, and straightforward art. Few modern painters have achieved so wide a variety within the limits of a sharply-defined style, few have pursued with so unshaken a determination the highest path available to them, and none, we may safely say, have given way so thoroughly to the fascination of antique pagan life, and have remained so pure and



cheerful in the contemplation of it. The sickliness of humanism has never clouded the healthy sunshine of this gay and wholesome spirit for so much as a moment.

Before attempting to sum up the position which Alma-Tadema has secured in the history of Art, it is well to remember that he is still at the height of his vitality, and will, in all probability, if his life be spared to us, ascend

to fresh heights in the pursuit of his ambition. A life of Mantegna, or of Titian, at the age of forty-six, would have told us nothing of *The Triumphs of Julius Caesar*, and nothing of the *Peter Martyr*. It may very well prove that Alma-Tadema will be chiefly known to posterity by something which has not yet been even vaguely suggested to his imagination. In the meantime the critic who would fain do something more than chronicle his successes, is in the difficult position of one who has to guess the ultimate volume of a river without knowing how soon the stream before him will find its way to the sea. Alma-Tadema has, however, reached that time of life at which an artist is not likely — much less likely, for instance, than a man of letters — to change the entire course of his life's work. He may advance and develop, but it is very improbable that he will make any new start. The technical part of his practice has become his own, and if the freak should take him to paint a Royal Wedding, or an English baby crowing in the arms of a modern mamma, the technique would betray the painter of *Sappho* and *Agrippa*. The suggestion of a domestic subject, to which we have accidentally been led, may be dwelt upon so far as to point out that such a theme, unlikely as it is to be chosen, would not be as absurd in Alma-Tadema's hands as in those of Gérôme or of Siemiradzki. The mind acknowledges so much, and we may take this admission as striking the key-note of the difference between the Dutch master of antique life and all others



ENTRANCE TO THE STUDIO.

who have essayed to paint it. This difference, then, consists in the domestic, the intimate, the humane character of Alma-Tadema's work, in which, as it seems to us, his great originality lies. Gérôme, who is his senior by a decade, and whose *Greek Cock-Fight* dates from 1847, seems to claim the precedence as a realiser of ancient life, and does indeed demand great praise for many of his early compositions. But a mixture of frivolity and sensuality has been fatal to his final success, and it is only perhaps in one work, the *Ave Caesar*, in which

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the gladiators greet Vitellius in the circus, that Gerôme can seriously be named by the side of Alma-Tadema in historical painting. The former, though a great genius, one of the glories of modern art, has never seized the notion that Romans were men of like passions with ourselves. He has taken the epigrams of Martial and the diatribes of Suetonius too much *au sérieux*. For the French painter, as for a great poet of our own, Roman society has meant the unbridled worship of the Thallasian goddess of torture and lust:—

On sands by the storm never shaken,  
Nor wet from the washing of tides,  
Nor by foam of the waves overtaken,  
Nor winds that the thunder be-  
strides,  
But red from the print of thy paces,  
Made smooth for the world and its  
lords,  
Ringed round with a flame of fair faces,  
And splendid with swords.

This is the Rome of Siemiradzki, of the whole school of Gerôme, but it is not the Rome of Alma-Tadema. For him the live torches of Nero, the slaves thrown to the murrhinas in the pond, the horrors of Caligula and Heliogabalus, were exceptions, not types; and he has held it to be a cheap form of sensation to serve up a second time the obvious horrors of the past. He has said to himself, this great civilization, these mighty masterpieces of architecture, these glorious systems of military and legal science, were not constructed by maniacs and debauchees. On the surface of their society some wild and frantic figures may have flared until they sank into oblivion, but underneath the scum of public life there must have laboured millions of respectable and pious persons. Alma-Tadema has been the first to take cognisance of this

great passive class. Ancient literature has a little to say about it, but ancient art has nothing. The bust of the master, bloated with indulgence, comes down to us in marble, a monument of pride and cruelty; but no sculptor has preserved to us the features of the slaves who tilled his fields, who contrived to fill his coffers, who stocked his library with papyri. Perhaps it hardly occurs to us to recollect that it was a slave whose vigorous hand modelled and carved that very marble satire on the unconscious master. It has been left to a Dutchman, with his hereditary love for the details of home-life, and the dignity of democratic forms of existence,

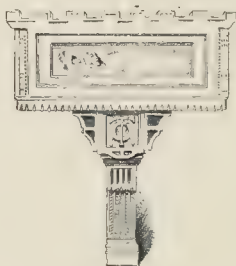


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to reveal to us the way in which the virtuous ladies of the sub-patrician class, the higher slaves, the craftsmen and shopkeepers, the busy messengers and boatmen of the vast capital of the Empire, spent laborious lives which, we may be quite sure, were not enlivened every day by a butchery of captive Moors or Saxons. This intimate charm, linked with a curiosity about antiquity and a knowledge of it which is almost as much literary as artistic, is what gives Alma-Tadema his unique position among painters of the nineteenth century.

One final word may be said about a practice of his which has been often commented upon but never explained in print. Alma-Tadema never dates his pictures, but numbers them consecutively, great and small, as they leave his studio. At the moment when I write he has just inscribed a little cabinet-work with the figures CCXLVI. There are two reasons which have led to the adoption of this plan, which is peculiar, perhaps, to this artist. One is a pure matter of convenience; the picture-season, properly speaking, closing in July, it is awkward that pictures painted after that month should seem a year old when they are presented next year to the amateur; the other is that it is a great check upon forgery, as the identical number cannot be copied without the fear of instant detection, and as, if a number is chosen at hazard, the painting may at any moment be confronted with the genuine picture which holds that rank in the painter's record.

EDMUND W. GOSSE.





PAUL JACQUES AIMÉ BAUDRY







VENUS AND CUPID.

## PAUL JACQUES AIMÉ BAUDRY.



WHEN we try to find expression for the prominent characteristics of the school of high Art in France in the nineteenth century, three names at once occur to us as closely identified with its three main lines of development during the last sixty years: those of Ingres, Delacroix, and Baudry. Ingres, with his Greek feeling and wonderfully keen eye, has given the highest expression to pure form; Delacroix discovered marvellous harmonies of colour and a dramatic fire, which was the outcome of the romanticism of the time; Baudry extended the possibilities of decorative painting by endowing it with a peculiar lucidity of atmosphere—a brilliant but soothing daylight effect. With regard to the two first, all has been said that there is to say; we will here endeavour to do adequate justice to the third.

Baudry is a son of the Renaissance; the stately and elegant aspects of nature are those that strike him most; his eye lends length to natural forms—not with such an exaggeration and mannerism as we see in Primaticcio and the masters of the Fontainebleau school, but with a ready and unflinching appreciation of their essential characteristics, of their right proportions, and of the subtle relations of balance and action, so as to reveal the structure of the human body by giving due importance to its typical forms. Like the masters of the sixteenth

century, he draws the extremities of slender mould; his figures are full of intense vitality, and he treats them with playful ease and eloquent expression. Like those masters again, he has studied the workmanship of his art from his earliest years.

Paul Baudry was born on the 7th November, 1828, at La Roche-sur-Yon, in La Vendée—the native soil of fiery temperaments and determined wills. His father was a sturdy country gentleman, devoted to an open-air life and an indefatigable walker, from whom his son Paul at a very early age caught that fresh and un-self-conscious love of Nature which characterized him. From his childhood the boy was accustomed to take long walks across the country. He and his father would start early in the morning before the cool night dews were off the face of Nature or the first sunbeams had scattered the mists—an hour when every impression is stamped

sharply and permanently on the mind. They would go fishing or shooting; above all, they kept as far as possible from the town, which father and son equally disliked; they got home as late as possible, having seen the country at the two hours of the day when the contrast is most striking between the vigorous freshness of sunrise and the melancholy calm of sunset. Paul Baudry to this day remembers vividly those expeditions of long ago, and loves to talk about them; he is convinced that they had a decisive influence on his feeling and his eye as a landscape painter; he still sees in memory all the various aspects of that province of France, and can reproduce them, with the precision of an echo, in the background of his pictures.

The time when he was not out walking was spent at school, where the boy enjoyed all the pleasures of success. He had an excellent memory, and learnt long lessons easily by heart, so that in everything which needed a clear and rapid memory—history and geography—he was always at the head of the class. Arithmetic and geometry had no attractions for the boy who, even as a man, has never had any taste for mathematics, and finds serious difficulties in a division sum. One day, Sartoris, the Art professor of the town, took the boy home with him and showed him a smart picture of a prim Virgin painted in bright colours and surrounded by pretty little angels. The boy exclaimed at once, "I want to do that too, I want to be a painter."

For three years Paul Baudry worked under Sartoris, gaining practice for eye and hand, but learning nothing of either perspective or anatomy. Something more was needed, and this Sartoris perceived. He induced the town council, therefore, to

grant the boy an allowance of four hundred francs; the Maire and the Préfet also took an interest in the young artist; and ere long Paul Baudry found himself on the road to Paris.

Paris! The magic name had charmed his longing fancy, as it has that of every lad who has, or thinks he has, a vocation. But the disillusion was swift and complete. Accustomed to live in the open air all day, to his father's friendly chat and his mother's loving care, the exile soon felt deserted and alone in this wilderness of stone and among crowds of strangers. A narrow attic after the wide country landscape, a sedentary life in the studio after those long rambling walks! He felt desperately home-sick, and nothing but his fixed determination to succeed, and to do credit to his parents and patrons, could have enabled him to triumph over his utter depression. It was with a full heart that he followed the advice given him by his worthy friend Sartoris and went to Drolling, who at that time (1844) enjoyed a high reputation as a teacher and as an artist. Drolling received him coolly enough. "Well," he said, "come again in a week."

"Nay," said Baudry, "I will come again to-morrow." The master was somewhat surprised at this



A STUDY.



impatient zeal, but he never felt any particular confidence in the future success of his new pupil. Baudry's companions, however, judged differently; when they saw his first study in oils none of them could believe that it was the work of a beginner, the touch and the colouring were so full of power and facility.

Baudry went to Drolling's with all the freshness and frankness of ignorance, free from every taint of prejudice and all foregone conclusions. An unsophisticated eye, a mind as free to receive every impression as virgin wax, an honest devotion to Nature, and a genuine love of realistic truth—these were his mental equipment.

In 1845 Baudry was first in the competition for admission to the École des Beaux Arts at Paris; in 1846, when he was still no more than eighteen, he carried off the second *prix de Rome* with a picture of *Vitellius dragged to the Gemonia*,\* Leneveu taking the first simply out of favour as he was the elder; and his picture was so remarkable that David of Angers, with Drolling himself, went to the young artist's humble lodgings to compliment him in person. The two next years were uneventful as to prize-winning, but in 1850 Baudry gained the first grand prize with a picture of *Zenobia found on the Banks of the Araxes*, the second falling to M. Bouguereau. And since the day when these two young artists won their early laurels side by side, how widely have their paths diverged.

During this period of pupilage he painted *St. Peter meeting his Friends after his Deliverance from Prison*, *Ulysses recognised by Euryycleia*, and *The Death of Pompey*. The conspicuous qualities of these works are a conscientious realism and happy instinct for the composition of lines, a clean firm handling of the brush and a keen

eye promising subtlety of apprehension; but his strong individuality could not assert itself; we can trace an incipient power, but the power itself is not there; the colouring is neither complex nor original. Still, some portions of the *Zenobia*, particularly the figure of the young shepherd, are firmly and truthfully painted, and the morning atmosphere has a peculiar lucidity which reveals the future colourist. To this day the luminous quality of his picture stands out conspicuously among the other canvases in the gallery at the École des Beaux Arts, where the prize pictures are hung.

Having got thus far, Baudry now found himself at Rome. At first Rome affected him as Paris had done a few years before. Its historical associations, poetical legends, and impressive grandeur crushed and overwhelmed his startled mind. By degrees, however, his long wanderings across the sunlit solitudes of the Campagna, with the endless lines of its remote horizon, through many hours of calm and lonely dreaming, restored his balance, and then he could appreciate the unique magnificence of the Eternal City and search its galleries for a master. Caravaggio chiefly attracted him with his masterful power and coarse breadth of



CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

handling. A figure of *Theseus* (1851)—the first picture he sent home—and a picture of *Jacob wrestling with the Angel* (1852) plainly show the influence of this master.

\* This picture is now at the Mairie at La Roche-sur-Yon, Baudry having presented it to his native town.



SAIN. JOHN.

Baudry has lived to think differently. In an article on Schnetz he speaks of Caravaggio's style as "rough and violent, brutally truthful." This revulsion may be traced, too, in the following words: "This strange individuality which now strikes us as somewhat wrong-headed."

For a time he came under the sway of Raphael; his wonderful charm could not fail to be felt by a spirit so alive to grace of form: "fairer than beauty," is what he says.

Michael Angelo was far above his bashful gaze. Baudry dared not think he understood him. In a few excursions he made to Assisi, to Perugia, and to Florence he made acquaintance with the early Italian painters, and a journey to Naples opened his eyes still further. There—not to mention the purity of form revealed to him by the Antique which he carefully worked from at Pompeii—the vivid colouring and dazzling brilliancy of southern nature positively enchanted him. All the colouring of which he afterwards displayed such complete mastery he there saw spread before his eyes in the gleaming azure of the bay, the transparent waters that dance round Ischia and Capri, the fiery glow of daylight, and the lucent serenity of the night.



A STUDY.

It was at Parma, however, that the spirit from on high finally fell upon his soul; there, face to face with Correggio, he saw and understood, and his painter's soul sprang into vitality at the touch. The same impulse which at first had led him to prefer Caravaggio now attached him to Correggio. In him he found the same naturalistic sentiment which had appealed to him before, but ennobled, transfigured with every lavish adjunct of beauty of form and colour and sensual charm. And this realism is not the result of deliberately choosing a certain beautiful or suggestive type; it comes of the sense of space and light, the medium in which the figures live. Space and light; the words may stand for Correggio. The light in his work does not illuminate merely a spot in the picture; it floods the whole work, "pulling it together" and giving it a grand unity of effect. Correggio's feeling he absorbed into his own, and from the very first he seized and assimilated the creative essence of his master, the very marrow of his meaning. A careful study of the head of the Magdalen in the *Saint Jerome* at the Academy at Parma, very diligently thought out and elaborated, gave him a tenderness of handling of which he had hitherto been quite ignorant, and his wonderful memory supplied everything else.

At Venice he was able to supplement and amplify the impressions he had acquired at Parma. The place itself, to begin with, its fairylike beauty, its iridescence of violet and blue, its palaces

with their marble fronts reflected in wavering lines of light on the lapping waters below, the damp air veiling and tinting every detail—bewitched him before he had time to study its old masters. But ere long Titian and Veronese showed him all the beauty of their noble type of humanity, of their gorgeous costumes, of the lavish splendour of composition and amazing resources of imagination that they could command; in short, Art at its ease, free and magnificent. Titian especially revealed to him the mystery of distant landscape. By giving the background and surroundings a degree of importance which they had never had before, and some share and value in the transaction represented, Titian in his *Peter Martyr* effected a positive revolution in Italian theories of art; the bright light in the background and the mysterious depths in front, suit with the bloody deed. This intimate alliance of a human drama with the sweet freshness of out-of-door nature conveys a strong impression of reality. Baudry understood the lesson and did not forget it. Then, in order to carry away a clear practical remembrance of Titian, he copied several of his finest figures, choosing with his unfailing instinct the most beautiful of the female figures in the procession of the *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*, to acquire the power of distinguishing delicate qualities of tone. He also copied the figure of the martyred victim in the *Miracle of St. Mark*, and the *Adam and Eve* of Tintoretto, with the luminous touch of Titian himself; and having

done this he had every right to feel that he had wrung from the Venetians the secret of their flesh-tints. He soon gave proof of the fact in the third picture he sent from Rome (1853), *Fortune and the Boy*, in which the influence is self-evident of the *Sacred and Profane Love* in the Borghese Palace. Baudry had, of course, known this work before his journey to Venice, but he did not fully understand and appreciate it till he had studied Titian on his native soil. It was not till he had been to Venice that he could duly value a Titian at Rome, but then, by a singular process of memory, instead of seeking inspiration from the numerous works of the master that were close at hand, his thoughts reverted to those he had left behind. Though this picture of *Fortune and the Boy* was executed in Rome, it had been composed and thought out on the square of St. Mark. Baudry is here truly Venetian in the deep amber glow of his lights, the luscious quality of the flesh, and the feeling of the composition; still he reserves his independence, and shows it in the characteristic originality of the grouping and a personal element which is recognisable in a certain treatment of natural objects of which the naïf truthfulness—a little clumsy and yet lifelike—is at once startling and delightful. The light and graceful attitude of Fortune with her lovely head, her delicately-formed face—where we see a trace of Da Vinci's mysterious smile and with it a subtlety that is wholly French—the child's face again, the perfect harmony of the two figures with the landscape and the atmosphere, all display a power that may almost be called creative—honest, loving, and thoughtful workmanship and a mature strength, which has effected a happy union of the independent spirit of contemporary poetry with the time-honoured traditions of Venetian painting.

At this time Baudry's youthful fancy was vivified and guided by taste rather than by a powerful imagination. Baudry was more alive to the voluptuous beauty of form and colour than to tragical power, and his own mind supplied him with pictorial images rather than with any lofty and solemn inspiration. To him action was of secondary importance to the supreme poetry of form, and he succeeded better in displaying the limbs of a beautiful nymph in a shady and verdurous landscape than in endowing her with vitality.

And he must have felt this himself as soon as he took so dramatic a subject in hand as the *Execution of a Vestal Virgin*. This work is deficient in well-considered method and a mature feeling for composition; it is painted but not thought out. Still the painting is masterly, the workmanship thoroughly good; and the feeling for both drawing and colour, the breadth, and the entire truthfulness, are such as to show the hand of a true artist. He has cast aside all conventional types, all specious notions, vulgar poses, and traditional formulas, and we see that henceforth his works will bear the stamp of individuality.

In fact this is plainly perceptible in two portraits painted in the same year, one of which—that of the Baron Jard-Pauvillier\*—may be ranked with the finest of the modern school.

A copy of Raphael's *Jurisprudence*, full of masterly intelligence, a reduced replica of *Fortune and the Boy*,

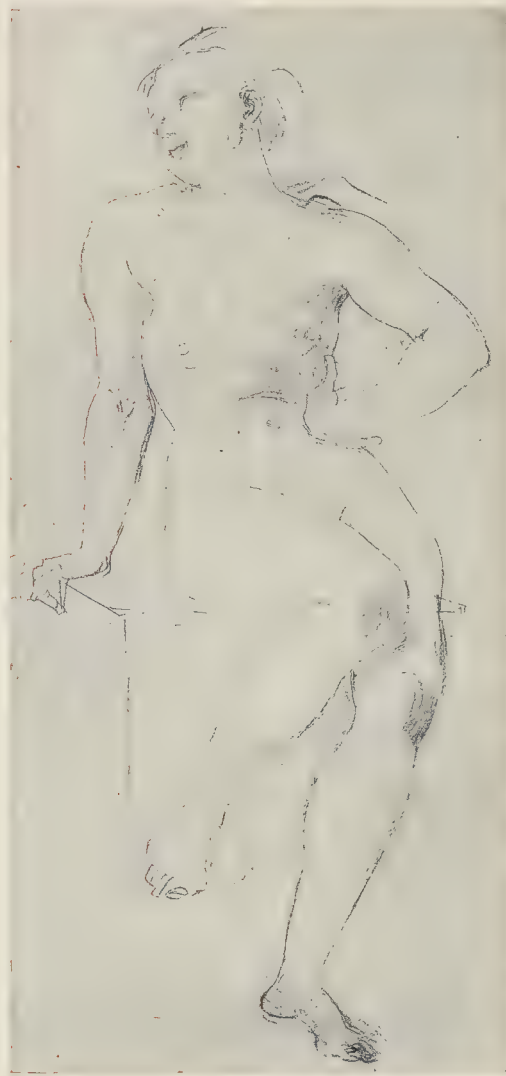
\* The other is that of M. Foucher de Careil, member of the Senate.



COMEDY.



very superior in delicate freedom to the first, and the *Death of Caesar*, a little study in light and shade, quite



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Dutch in effect, complete the list of his works during that first visit to Rome, which was so full of promise and already so important in its results.

The five years then spent in the Eternal City, and his repeated visits there since, left a deep impression on Baudry's mind. He remembers with affectionate pathos the humble lodging that housed his incipient glory. "The little room, lined with glazed tiles and Arabian in appearance, if only by reason of its meagre allowance of furniture, had the one great merit of overlooking the city and commanding the whole vast horizon of Rome. Only to speak of it calls up memories of our gay, studious, and ever-to-be-regretted youth. Which of you has gazed without keen delight at that sky of azure and milky whiteness, at the ruins of the seven hills, and the long line of mountains, the blue or snow-covered peaks that wall in the vast plain beyond."\*

It was a pleasant and profitable life that he led there under the care of Schnetz, the indulgent and keen-witted director, whose authority was felt only just so much as to add enjoyment and zest to liberty; and it is very evident that this Italian atmosphere and healthy and regular life were far more favourable to serious study than that of Paris. In the French metropolis the spirit is soon over-excited and overwrought by the conflict of ambitions, the fevered whirl of life, and—it must be said—by the imperative necessity of making a living.

Baudry came back to France in 1856, deeply regretting Rome and somewhat dubious as to what Paris might have in store for him. He

\* From a paper on the Life and Works of Schnetz, by Paul Baudry, read at a meeting at the Académie des Beaux Arts, Paris, August 22, 1874.

knew full well that the works he had sent home had not found favour in the sight of the Academy; that *Fortune and the Boy*, especially, had disturbed their traditional theories of beauty. The echoes of their dissatisfaction had even reached the Villa Medici. However, the public were about to reverse the verdict. In the Salon of 1857, *Fortune and the Boy*, the *Execution of a Vestal Virgin*, the *Leda*, the *Little St. John*, and the *Portrait of M. Beulé*, all exhibited at once, set Baudry in the topmost rank of rising painters. By referring to the papers and writings of the day we see how warmly each of these works was discussed—blamed by some, praised by many, appreciated by all competent to judge. Purchasers competed for them almost before they were finished. The Empress acquired the *St. John*; *Fortune and the Boy* went at once to the Luxembourg collection; the *Execution of a Vestal Virgin* was bought by the Government; M. de Villeneuve was so fortunate as to secure the *Leda*.

Of all these early works the *Leda* is now the most admired, and it is, in fact, the one which bears the plainest traces of the painter's elegance of style and feeling, at once tender and powerful, for female beauty. Against the velvety shade of an umbrageous landscape, full of slender-stemmed trees whose dense blue-green foliage is scarcely pervious to the sunbeams, we see Leda standing on a thick carpet of russet mosses, through which flows a tranquil stream. The figure stands out slenderly and delicately moulded, with a dim and shadowy whiteness that adds a charm to her loveliness. The eyes are darkly, brightly blue, her gaze is startled and doubtful; the sweetness of



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of the smiling lips, the pure and delicate features, the colour of the hair, which shades off into the dull gold of faded leaves, the lovely curves of the figure, the chequered shivering lights on the texture of the skin, the flowing lines of the limbs—her whole being, in short, responds to the Swan's bold caress as his silvery wing and snake-like neck press lovingly against her side. It is altogether the freshest and fullest revelation of virgin colouring—fair and transparent; the shadows have lost all opaqueness in the magical atmosphere, they are gilded by the hidden sunshine. It is a subtle analysis, on quite a small scale, of female beauty wrought with infinite patience to the mellowest finish; and though the model is absolutely modern, the figure is full of that style which had seemed to be the secret of the Greeks and the Italians—far beyond prettiness or even the mere literal representation of the most perfect beauty.

The success of his *Portrait of M. Beulé* was, however, his real starting-point. It was the first of a series of very fine portraits, which only came to a pause when the painting of the Opera House took up all the master's time. Among the best of these

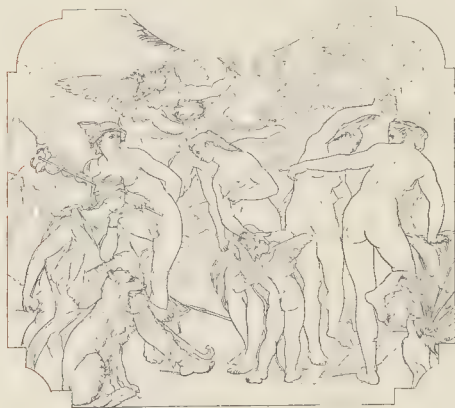


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portraits must be mentioned that of *M. Guizot*, a severe and ascetic head. We see him in quiet meditation, a look of abstraction in his bright and steady eye, thoughtful but resolute, his pale lips firmly and imperiously set with the determination of an inflexible purpose. The complexion has a parchment-like texture produced by incessant work and advancing years; every fold of the coat he wears, and which is admirably drawn, is characteristic of the lean but vigorous frame within: *crude viridisque senectus*. This picture, exhibited in 1861, divided the honours of the Salon with Flandrin's portrait of Prince Napoleon, to which it now looks—as it is—immeasurably superior. In the same Salon Baudry's portrait of *Baron Charles Dupin* served as a foil to his impressive neighbour—a little heavy and sleepy-looking, as he commonly was when the agitating questions of Protection and Free Trade had not roused his dormant fires. Again, in the same exhibition, he had a portrait of *Mme. Madeleine Brohan*, in all the splendour of her gorgeous beauty, her subtle and significant smile, and her brilliant complexion. Then between 1857 and 1863 he painted *Eugène Giraud*, a masterpiece of vigorous character-painting; *Ambroise Baudry*, his brother, the pale melancholy head standing out against a light green background touched with a full delicate brush, which is not fettered by the smallness of the scale; *M. Crescent, père*, a mellow, finely wrinkled face with thin silky hair; *Achille Fould*, *Guillaume Guizot*,

*Alfred André*, *Gérard*, the *Comtesses de la Bédoyère*, *de Nadailac*, and *de Belluaf*, *Mme. Garnier*, *Mlle. Céline Montaland* and *Jane Essler*. All these portraits, besides many more, betray a peculiar and personal æsthetic theory. Baudry's chief aim—and it is the true tradition of the highest art—is to detect and grasp the spirit, the character, the ruling idea of his subject, sacrificing every secondary detail in order to give full value to the expression of the head.

In 1858 Baudry made his preliminary attempt at decorative painting by executing twelve arches and two entablatures over the doors of *M. Achille Fould's* great drawing-room. In each arch an escutcheon, bearing attributes symbolical of one of the twelve principal gods, is supported by three children floating in a blue sky faintly clouded



THE JUDGMENT OF LARKS

with white. Their vigorous upward flight, the variety of their movements, the boldness of their attitudes, the sheen of their dimpled flesh, the fresh and rosy life which warms their graceful limbs and smiles in their radiant beauty, have an unmistakable reminiscence, a subtle perfume of Correggio. The free use of the brush, which is peculiarly needed for facile decorative work and so favourable to an inventive genius, had already taken possession of Paul Baudry, and was far more to his mind than the patient labour of a finished picture.

However, the Salon of 1859 held two of his most elaborate works: *A Penitent Magdalen* and *Venus at her Toilet*. Both these figures, notwithstanding their difference of motive, were alike treated with a very earthly feeling for elegance, relieved by a touch of natural beauty. In one, a ravine between rocks opens on a wild landscape of hills covered with woods, and at their base a stream dances over stones. The colour throughout is sober, dim, and neutral, so as to give the utmost relief to the figure of the Magdalen, who is on her knees, supporting herself on one hand, while the other arm hangs languidly at full length by her side. Pearly lights and tender rosy shadows of delicious transparency give a wonderful delicacy to the flesh-tints, but do not mar its living solidity and substance, and an all-pervading silvery atmosphere gives unity to the picture.

The critics at the time, who were accustomed to a certain conventional mode of handling sacred subjects, did not think this Magdalen duly ascetic; but twenty-three years later, in the Rue de Sèze, it charmed our eyes



—now more alive to the beauties of the female figure than to a severe rendering of Biblical history. It was long before Baudry's time that Correggio, in treating the same subject, had shaken off the fetters of tradition, with equal independence and to the great advantage of Art.

The year 1861 was a very busy one. Besides his fine portraits of *Guizot* and *Baron Charles Dupin*, Baudry exhibited an *Infant St. John*, studied from Georges Swyekowski. He stands facing the spectator, one hand held to his head, the other holding a reed cross with a banner on which are the words *Agnus Dei*; the folds of the goatskin with which he is girt are full of cherries and blackberries.

After this, Baudry, abandoning for awhile the ideal heights of religion and mythology, took up a subject of almost contemporary history, a bloody scene from the Revolution, availing himself of every resource of realistic art, appropriate scenery, an admirable arrangement of light and shade, concentration of effect, expression in the faces, and a suitable choice of accessories. Marat, with the knife in his breast, has turned round; his attitude is a striking and bold piece of foreshortening. His bloodless face thrown backwards drooping on one shoulder, and one hand clutches the edge of the bath, which is covered by a sheet that hangs on the floor; his right arm is bare to the shoulder. Stately and tall, leaning against the wall by the side of the window, her right arm rigid and her hand clenched as though still holding the knife, her left hand clutching a projection of the wall to support her, stands Charlotte Corday, her eyes staring wildly into space, her nostrils quivering, her lips set. The painter has shown us the scene as Michelet told it: "She drew the knife out from under her handkerchief and plunged it to the hilt in Marat's breast. 'Help, my dear, help!' was all he could say, and he was dead. The people of the house ran in and saw Charlotte standing by the window, upright as if she were petrified." It is this stupor in Charlotte "as if she were petrified" which lifts the work above the commonplace realism of a scene of murder, and gives us a page of history in its stern simplicity.



THE DEATH OF ORPHEUS

Having made this dashing raid on dramatic painting, he retired to his own domain once more. At that time painting for painting's sake was what he cared for most. He would rather study than invent, and feel than think; and at the very time when he was working at *Charlotte Corday* he composed two little pictures in which he once more solved the double problem of showing the radiant brightness of effects of strong diffused light, and of working out a composition in which the different lines flow into and balance each other, meeting and diverging in a graceful arabesque of form. These two small replicas of the paintings done to be placed over the doors of a room at the Comtesse de Nadailac's house at Passy are remarkable for their delicate gradations of light and their finished and elaborate execution. In subtlety of texture and shading they are even finer than the original panels. In one, on a blue drapery, lies Cybele by the side of her lions; in the other Amphitrite leans on a similar drapery arranging her hair, while a winged boy holds the mirror for her; just behind her another boy blows a conch-shell, and we see the prow of a galley. They are nothing more than two beautiful figures of women, their fair transparent skins glowing with golden light; but they are enough for the painter who, by his happy choice of accessories, by originality of pose, elegance of modelling, and rare tone of colour, has produced such a result as had not been seen since the beginning of the century.

*The Five Italian Cities*, executed to decorate the Duc de Galliera's hôtel, are no less happy as to

arrangement, though the painting is less lavish in style. The general tone is a violet-blue, in obedience to the exigencies of the scheme of decoration, and the result is more advantageous to the effect of the whole than to the colouring and delicacy of the figures themselves. Each city is personified as a woman, framed in a fanciful border and supported by two genii carrying palms, standards, escutcheons, or attributes. The relief of the figures against the sky and the lights on the modelling are judiciously toned down to suit the purpose of the work as a mural decoration, and they stand in majestic array: imperial Rome, Florence the learned, Genoa the wealthy, mourning Venice, and pleasure-loving Naples—each with the expression on her features and the various attributes which bespeak her past glorious history.

These successive studies of female figures had given Baudry a perfect knowledge of the nude, and in 1863 he exhibited a masterpiece in this line, *The Wave and the Pearl*. A huge wave, looking like an emerald curtain fringed with silver, shuts out the horizon and the sky; it has just thrown up on the sand, among the seaweed



TRUTH.

and the opalescent shells, a very young woman—a living flower of the sea—lying in an indolent attitude. Her back is towards the spectator, one leg bent under the other, and her arms thrown over her head like the handles of an amphora; her fair hair falls waving and dripping on her shoulders. One more toss of the roller and her face would be turned to us, but the waters that have cast her on shore have paused, spell-bound as it would seem in their curve, to worship this exquisite Nereid. No drapery covers the lovely limbs, the breeze is kissing away the last drops that cling to them and sparkle like diamonds. She has turned her head with a glance of curiosity, and we see her sea-blue eyes wide open in surprise, and her coral lips with a tricky childlike smile. The salt sea has not marred the dazzling whiteness of her limbs, but we feel the freshness of the water on them, like the dew on the petals of a lily. They are throbbing with vitality in the broad light of morning; we see the flesh quivering, with a rosy bloom like the flower of the peach, or dazzlingly white like the texture of a white camellia just opening, or bright with satin lustre where the light falls—the blood showing through the transparent skin. The figure—blending in a delightful flow with not a single disfiguring angle, is married in a

perfect union, while the pale tints of the flesh against the glaucous emerald hues of the wave give a distinction and freshness to the colouring which are quite unique. The execution is not what strikes the eye, but only the result. It is impossible to detect any tricks of impasto, glazing, or rubbing down, any elaborate brush-work or special manipulation; there is no display of dexterity; we forget the workmanship in the feeling for form and colour.

In 1864, having been warned by friendly hints that he was about to be commissioned to decorate the ceiling of the new Opera House in Paris, Baudry felt it his duty to go to Rome, to refresh his inspiration at the main stream before undertaking so important and honourable a task. And now he was able to understand Michael Angelo, whose incomparable greatness had formerly transcended his apprehension. To make himself familiar with this giant among men, he made eleven large studies from his works. Still he was not unfaithful to Correggio, his first love, and copied his lovely *Danaë*. It was also evidently under the inspiration of

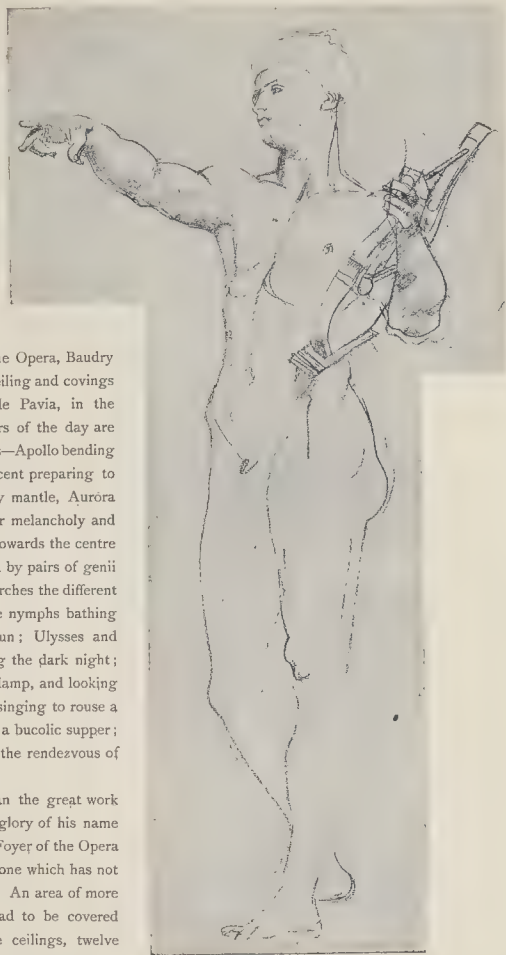
Correggio that he painted his *Diana Surprised*, with her fully-marked outline and amber-toned flesh, driving away an indiscreet Love with a haughty gesture of insulted purity. The veteran Schnetz, who was still the academical director at Rome, came to see this Diana, and pronounced his opinion on it. Baudry himself gave his fellow-artists a lively account of the dialogue.

"Well," said Schnetz, "but the figure is too flat, too monotonous in tone. In my day," he went on with that quaint one-sided smile you all remember—"in my day a woman's bosom was tinged with pink and her knees too, ever so little; her hands and feet had a sort of bloom; and all these little touches gave life and warmth to the figure. You, as it seems to me, have left out the flavouring."

Before beginning his work at the Opera, Baudry tested his powers in decorating the ceiling and covings in the elegant hôtel of Madame de Pavia, in the Champs Élysées. The four quarters of the day are represented by mythological divinities—Apollo bending his bow, Hecate with her silver crescent preparing to wrap her naked limbs in her starry mantle, Auróra still asleep on her rosy cloud, Vesper melancholy and pensive; all these figures converge towards the centre of the oval vault, and are connected by pairs of genii which symbolise the hours. In the arches the different phases of the day reappear: we see nymphs bathing under the rays of the mid-day sun; Ulysses and Diomedes laying their snares during the dark night; inquisitive Psyche holding the fatal lamp, and looking at love in the early dawn; Diana singing to rouse a sleeping camp; the first libations of a bucolic supper; finally, the long-wished-for hour of the rendezvous of love.

At last, in 1866, Baudry began the great work which above all others renders the glory of his name imperishable, the decoration of the Foyer of the Opera House, a really immense work, and one which has not had its equal since the Renaissance. An area of more than four hundred square yards had to be covered with paintings, consisting of three ceilings, twelve covings, ten architraves, and eight intermediate panels. How was he to fill these large spaces with a composition adapted to its purpose, variations on one and the same theme, inspired by a common idea, connected without stiffness?

Following the example of Michael Angelo, Baudry conceived of his epic as a single picture having episodic developments all radiating from a common centre. While Architecture and Sculpture, on one hand, have given harmonious unity to the



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solidity and inertia of this sumptuous building, Painting, on the other hand, has found its function in introducing the vital elements of life and motion. Want of space forbids our entering upon the details of this work, which will be found in the too little known "Study of the Painting of Paul Baudry in the Foyer of the New Opera



DECORATIVE STUDY FOR THE APOTHEOSIS OF THE LAW

House at Paris," by M. Camille Renard, Professor of the History of Arts at the Académie des Beaux Arts at Liège. Antwerp, 1874.

From the comprehensive trinity of Poetry, Music, and Dancing the author has wrought out an infinite variety of detailed compositions, each of which is directly referable to the original and fundamental idea.

Each in its turn, and in obvious succession, without any sudden break or leap displayed under its most brilliant aspect. And here we may point out to the reader what a vast amount of patient toil, of thoughtful study, of laborious inquiry it must have cost the country lad—brought up at an elementary school—before he



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could achieve such a masterly synthesis of the inexhaustible treasures of ancient Greece supplemented by a few Biblical legends. The unlearned boy from La Roche-sur-Yon, the open-hearted student of rural nature, absolutely devoid of the barest elements of a college education, with no master but his own talent and will, could throw himself into the very heart of Greece, the mother of civilisation; could move at his ease, take

full possession of her beautiful myths, understand and paint her mysterious symbols, to decorate the four angles of a Parisian opera-house with the types and scenes of the golden age. His imagination, which at first was but sluggish and somewhat narrow, had been stirred and enlarged by constant exercise. Then, suddenly brought face to face with an undertaking which demanded lofty inspiration and a bold flight, it stood revealed, armed *cap-a-pie* like Minerva newly sprung from Jupiter's brain.

In lifting his mind to a level at which it might be able to achieve such a conception as might worthily grace the temple of harmony—in depicting the guardian divinities of art in a panoply suited to their function—in peopling those ceilings and covings with an Olympus of gods and heroes, a Parnassus of poets and singers—in calling up the spirits of Orpheus and Homer, Apollo and the Muses, David and Saint Cecilia—sacred and secular music—his style gained in dignity and manliness; it has lost none of the delicious grace of the *Leda* and the *Wave*, but it has gained in addition an unexpected breadth, something antique and Olympian, but still savouring of the essentially modern individuality of the artist himself. This is still Greece, with the inexhaustible fertility of her legendary lore, in all the freshness and purity of her moulding, and the sovereign harmony of perfect singleness of purpose; but still it is Greece brought down to modern times, dressed for modern eyes, seen through the artist's personal medium, and quite outside any direct tradition—Attic, in short, and French at once. Other of our own artists have interpreted Greece and seen her differently.

The work was begun in the "piping times of peace," before France's latest troubles; but it was not finished till she had stood the ordeal of trial and sacrifice. The painter—who forsook for a time his brush and palette to take up arms and serve his country, and who set aside his artist's dreams to defend her—when ending the task that was flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone wished to dedicate it to the hope of a happier future. On the crumpled papyrus in Calliope's hand we read these words from Virgil:—

"O frassi gravura, Deus dabit his quoque finem."

It is well that the artist should, in the midst of gloom, point to the dawn of better days; and can there be a nobler way to labour at the resurrection of his country than by showing what national art can still do after so rude a shock?

Nor is this great work a labour of genius only; it is a work of disinterested devotion—"grande mortalis arve spatium." But he was wholly devoted to his grand task. During eight years he would not allow himself to do anything else excepting a few portraits of friends and reduced copies (in 1868) of Raphael's seven cartoons in the South Kensington Museum; and these very copies, which are full of the intelligent sympathy of a great master, were done with a view to study for the decorations at the Opera House. A willing prisoner to his lofty scaffolding, a solitary recluse in the heart of Paris, indefatigable and determined, he gave himself no rest till his giant's task was done. A rare instance of magnanimous self-sacrifice, especially in these days when the attractions of money exercise a fatal influence on Art.

However, just after the siege and during the anarchy of the Commune, the decoration of the Opera House came to an inevitable standstill. Baudry spent his forced leisure in a journey into the country, and during a short visit to Bordeaux and Nantes painted a few portraits. Among these we may note one of *M. Edmond About* in travelling dress, with a fur cap on, standing out in strong relief against a blue background. It is firm and emphatic in treatment, giving the clever writer's look of racy and satirical humour—a delightful little picture, and a worthy companion to the portrait of Ambroise Baudry. One of *Mme. César of Nantes*, a fair woman in a black velvet dress, seated in an arm-chair covered with yellow silk, over which lies an Indian shawl painted in a manner worthy of Ingres at his best. It is a masterpiece of colouring. Then we have *M. Massion* (also of Nantes), reminding us of Rembrandt's fine Flemish heads; *Mme. Massion*; *Mme. Chessé*, who wears a very bright and characteristic expression; the tone is warm with amber and golden hues. Some years before, as a debt of friendship and in remembrance of work done together, he had painted *M. Charles Garnier*—quite Rembrandtesque in character, in spite of a Florentine fifteenth-century type of features: this is remarkable for the solidity given to the form of the skull and the vigour both of colouring and brush work.

In 1874, the Opera House being finished, and Baudry the greatest and the poorest of French artists, he had once more to paint portraits for his daily bread. Out of this splendid series of works we may mention *Mlle. Denière*, on a dark blue sofa in a room full of luxurious accessories, very Parisian and lively, in an attitude of easy grace, in a light blue dress covered with transparent muslins, ribbons, and lace; the colour exquisitely



delicate throughout. The background is a delightful little curtain of iron-grey stuff; the hands—drawn by a master of the grand school—lie in bright and tender relief against the shadows of the dress. *Mlle. Denon*, *M. Hoschedé*, *Mlle. Hoschedé*, *Mme. Crémieu*, *M. and Mme. Breton Hachette*, the young *Ch. de Montbello*, *Mme. Boselli*, a sweet Flemish-looking blonde, as fresh as a newly-opened flower, with lovely bare arms, whose youthful roundness is delightfully modelled in a tender half-light; *M. Guillaume*, the sculptor, a keen inspired head; *M. Bordin, fils*, with a face like a Venetian noble of the best period; and finally a masterpiece which astounded all who saw it in the Salon of 1876 by its daring, and achieved a well-merited success—the magnificent portrait, namely, of General the Count de Palikao, full of dignified animation, a tall military figure, a soldier and a man of the world, elegant, brilliant, a conquering hero in his cavalry undress uniform. He is leaning against a chestnut horse which faces the spectator, with his head raised, his neck stretched, as if to sniff the battle—a fine and noble charger. The horse's proud attitude and stately proportions add to the grandeur of a picture which gains apparent size from the wide clear horizon behind; the transparent crisp atmosphere of a somewhat cold day lights up the background, to which life is imparted by the figure of a trumpeter on a grey horse, and the outline against the sky of a marching regiment. It is a work of the most strikingly novel conception, combining the imposing character of the portraits of the seventeenth century with the clear tones of open-air colouring.

Great and immediate as was the success of this portrait, Baudry could no longer keep himself from working at one of his great decorative canvases. The Opera House was far from having exhausted his fertile imagination, and the *Apotheosis of the Law* in the Salon of 1881 gave fresh evidence of his progress. It is well known that this great work was accepted and welcomed—a most unwonted honour—by unanimous acclamation on the part of the council of selection, and that it won

at once, without any question or competition, the first medal of the year, which was awarded for the first time in its history without a dissentient voice among the artists who voted it.

In front of the façade of a temple of the Renaissance, and on a marble plinth, we see *Law* seated, and holding in one hand her sacred tables, while with the other she points with an imperious gesture to *Jurisprudence*, who stands below on the steps of the sanctuary, receiving her commands with respectful attention. Above, to the right, hovers *Justice*, in her hand a naked sword and a pair of scales; to the left soars *Equity*, a measure in one hand and a crown of laurel in the other. At the foot of the throne stands *Authority*, rigid and upright, grasping the folds of a *tricolor* and resting one hand on the consular *fascis*; on the other side we see an administrator of the Law, a stern but noble figure draped in the crimson robes of a president of the Supreme Court of Appeal, and uncovering his head to *Law*. Close to him *Force* lounges, half sitting on a lion and



FORTUNE AND THE CHILD.

protecting *Innocence*, represented as a sleeping child. The arrangement of the figures is simple, grandiose, and original. Instead of falling in folds, which clinging to the body so as to reveal its modelling, like ancient Greek drapery, or falling, as with the Italians, with lightness and freedom, and following the movement of the limbs, or again, breaking into angular folds and ridges, like the drapery of the Germans, the diaphanous materials in which Baudry has robed *Law* and her suite float and balloon as if for some aerial flight, or are crumpled with careless grace, and indicate the general pose and movement of the figure rather than the

form of the body. Those who are familiar with the endless difficulties of the complicated and delicate handling of drapery will see in this new treatment of material a highly characteristic stroke of innovation.

The modelling of the figures is shown in broad daylight; there are no unnecessary shadows or tricky contrasts; the relief is broadly and boldly treated. The local colour always preserves its full value and individuality, untainted by the infusion of contending or reflected hues. It stands out supreme in its proper place, independent of any blending or compromise, as we see it in the great Venetians or in Delacroix. Thus the general harmony of the whole is not the result of any concession, so to speak, made by each hue to the rest, or of elaborate blending, but is produced by a happy choice of colours which give value to each other by contrast, without confusion; in the same way, in short, as in a judiciously planted garden bed, each flower contributes to the general brilliancy of effect while it retains all the vividness of its own colouring.

Round about the white sheeny robe of *Law* we have the red of the *Judge's* robes, thrown up by the green of *Authority's* dress, the gold brocade worn by



A. S. C. 1871

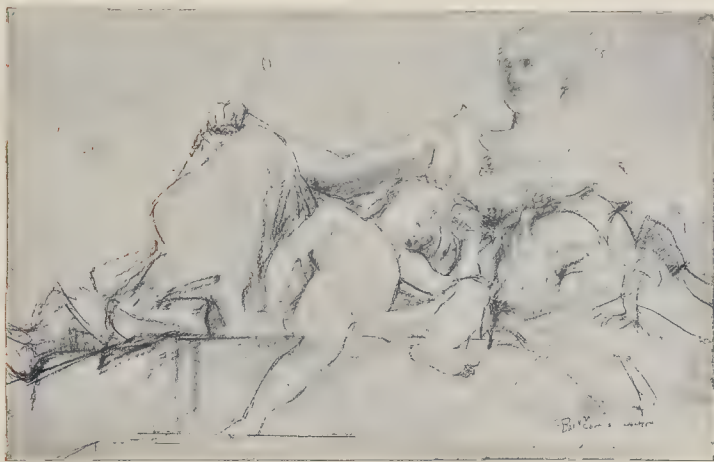
*Jurisprudence*, and *Justice's* blue drapery, all seen against the polish of the marble and the clear blue sky. It is a youthful and triumphant diapason of fresh and intense colour—a flourish of trumpets, rather let us say, loud and clear.

Still it is *Law* that we see here; not the Draconian and inexorable *Law* of the ages of oppression, armed with tortures, hasty to condemn and slow to remit, but *Law* as we know her now, merciful and magnanimous, pitiful and averse to strike, her too frequent handmaid, *Recommendation-to-Mercy*, good-natured and even indifferent,

if it were not that the strong and masculine figures of *Jurispudence* and the *Judge* strike a note of respect and wholesome fear in the midst of this bright and smiling scene.

This grand work betrays the unfailing, though no doubt unconscious, search after novelty, after the unforeseen, which is one of the most characteristic features of Baudry's pliant genius. He cannot endure to repeat or copy himself, to work from a single model. He does not think it right to invite the verdict of the public unless he offers it something new and original, some unexpected and daring effort, even if its success should not be certain and immediate. As following on the pictures of *Fortune*, the *Vestal*, *Charlotte Corday*, and the *Wave and the Pearl*, and on the gorgeous compositions in the Opera House, this *Saint Hubert* reveals a lofty artistic temperament, which the most deserved applause has failed to intoxicate; which, instead of always seeking success by the same path, makes bold to strike out another, and does not do again as it has done before.

*Saint Hubert* startled us at first no doubt. We were accustomed to the old pattern—a repentant huntsman on his knees and praying to the miraculous crucifix—and to meet him here, the portrait of the *Duc de Chartres*, in the very heat and fury of the chase, his back to us, his head seen in profile and thrown back with a sudden



DECORATIVE PANEL

gesture of surprise and alarm, his arms rigid, his legs apart for a leap checked in the very act in the midst of hot pursuit of the quarry—this was indeed something new, and which quite upset the votaries of the legend. The strange impression produced by the composition was perhaps increased by the singularity of the treatment. The perspective, instead of being worked out by retreating lines and by the rules of the science, is suggested only by the degrees of strength of colour, and an elaborate gradation of tints delicately brought out against faint neutrals, producing a clear bright harmony of effect that reminds us of the early Italian painters—though the *Saint Hubert* is pitched in a sharper key than their soft and calm-toned frescoes. Baudry has realised an exquisitely vaporous effect, new alternations and combinations of tints, ingenious gradations of tone, forming a scheme of colour as original as it is soft and soothing. It is one which is admirably adapted to a decorative panel for one of the largest saloons of the palace of Chantilly, surrounded by strongly-coloured tapestries, which in no way weaken its effect. As to the costume, the accessories, the weapons, and accoutrements, they are archaeologically accurate in every detail. The painter has set himself to represent with perfect exactitude a hunting scene in winter in the time of King Pepin *le bref*, when Saint Hubert lived. Taken altogether, it is a noble and original work *sui generis*, debatable and much debated, but vivid and powerful, though somewhat hampered perhaps by the form of the panel and the lack of space.



Above this *Saint Hubert*—which suffered a little from its brighter and purer tone—the ceiling of the great central hall in the exhibition in the Orangerie was decorated in an appropriate manner by the enormous composition which now graces a room in the mansion of its fortunate possessor, Mr. Vanderbilt of New York. This ceiling represents the *Wedding Banquet of Cupid and Psyche*.

From time immemorial the legend of Psyche has fascinated all story-tellers and painters. Raphael represented the ancient legend in the paintings which decorate the Farnesina and in a series of cartoons engraved by Marc Antonio and his pupils. Some curious old glass windows, which the Duc d'Aumale had put up in a corridor at Chantilly, and which are attributed to Jean le Pot from drawings by Cozil, are copies of the subjects from the great Italian master.\* Raphael closely followed the narrative of Apulius. The banquet scene shows us all the Olympian personages invited by Jupiter; it is treated with all the master's accustomed grace, but has



THE STUDIO (West).

no trace of the subtle humour that the Latin philosopher has infused into his story. Baudry, on the contrary, has not missed the slightly ironical vein in the legend; it came home to his Parisian mind, and he has even somewhat modified the description given by Apulius to accommodate it to his humour. When we look closely into his composition and seek out, rather narrowly perhaps, its half-hinted suggestions and mysterious purport, we can fancy that the painter, dressing up the old fabulist's humour to suit the scepticism of the day, has meant to represent love in marriage under four different points of view, placed, so to speak, at the four cardinal points.

The central personages of the feast, Cupid and Psyche, are sitting on an antique couch covered with lilac drapery. Cupid sits with his legs crossed, his body is nude, sheeny with the fine satiny texture of a flower in

\* They are shown in "Le Musée des Monuments Français," by Alex. Lenoir, vol. vi. pp. 99, &c. Also in M. Léon Palustre's work, "La Renaissance en France," vol. ii. p. 56. The glass was originally in the Château d'Ecouen.

the sunshine; the healthy freshness of early manhood is shown in the delicate creamy fairness of his flesh, at once firm and transparent. Psyche leans upon him, raising her pretty head to see him better, with a perfectly human gesture of innocent sweetness; her figure is lost in the floating folds of her white draperies. He looks at her with eager passion, but, conscious of the god within, he allows himself to be worshipped by his mortal bride; she leans at full length in all the abandonment of passionate devotion, absorbed in an embrace which would seem eternal. Below, symbolical accessories fill the picture: a saucy love, a cup of ambrosia round which three sparrows are fluttering, a dagger, the fatal lamp, a censer from which the fragrant vapour floats in wreaths. Above the banquet-board bends the distant ether, fresh and cool, with fleecy clouds of silvery whiteness, only just visible against the turquoise sky.

The four corners outside the oval contain groups of genii personifying the attributes of the different

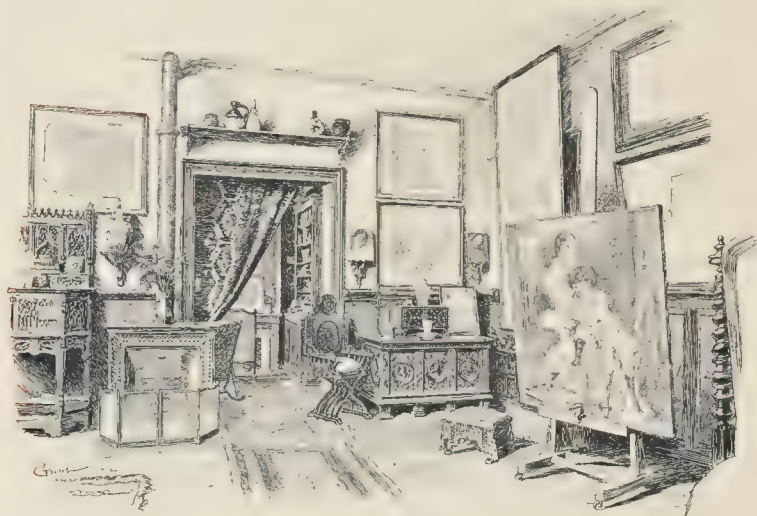


THE STUDY (East).

divinities, represented under the form of winged children, flying among clouds in the most natural attitudes, and foreshortened with a boldness and certainty which are a triumph of the master's powers as a draughtsman. At the same time the accessories and the children's wings, which are as brilliantly lucid as enamel, repeat the predominant tones of the central panel, and form a symphonious accompaniment to the chords of the principal harmony.

In looking simply at the pictorial qualities of this great composition we are first struck by the colouring, at once delicate and vivid, a few intense hues enlivening the generally subdued tone of the whole; a scheme of colour directly borrowed from Nature and from no school whatever, suggesting the refined mixture of contrast on a butterfly's wing, or the happy juxtaposition of colours in some piece of oriental pottery in which the maker, all ignorant of the complicated laws of colouring, has been guided by a wonderful instinct to exactly the right

combination and arrangement. There are no shadows to throw up the lights; the colours, placed in juxtaposition on no preconceived theory of harmony, give value to each other by their mutual relations; opalescent whites and the play of reflected gold are the semitones which serve to lead us from rose colour through creamy tones to silvery white, or to harmonize dull greens, intense violets, and dazzling blues. The whole result is a strong and assertive harmony produced by an amazing wealth of resource and an infinitely varied palette. There is nothing insipid or lightless here, as in some pictures of the last century, where the general luminosity of tone has enfeebled the stronger hues of pure colour. Here we are in broad bright daylight, intense sunshine in some parts, in others soft clear diffused light. The picture is at once bright and Arcadian, pleasing and forcible, beautiful and manly. These admirable gifts of colour have been wielded by a master draughtsman; the drawing is swift, light, and certain; he has known where to give solidity and definition to the outline, and where to let it remain undetermined so as to convey the impression—here of a sketch rapidly worked out with all its essential details, keenly observed, and thoroughly understood; there of a finished painting elaborated to the highest pitch of careful execution.



THE SMALLER STUDIO.

In a second ceiling, painted for another of the Vanderbilt family, Baudry has devoted himself to working out an *arrangement* of only two or three colours, shaded through a great variety of gradations so as to produce a harmonious whole characterized by extreme simplicity. It is in blue, violet, and grey. Phœbe, the Queen of Night, is seen among the stars of the rainy constellation of Orion. She is a powerfully-moulded figure with bare arms and a silver-rayed crown on her brow, wearing a short blue tunic tied round the waist, and her legs are scarcely veiled in light violet drapery. The terrestrial globe supports one knee and the hand that holds her bow. The moon is personified as at the end of her course; her round face with wide open eyes seems to shine with a dying light; and she holds up her arm, carrying on her finger-tip the pale crescent which throws off a filmy vapour, its essence as it were, of dead silver light. The Genius of Day has fallen asleep upon the globe in an exquisite attitude of weariness and dropped the torch of sunbeams; in the left-hand corner a large hound bays at the moon, while a little naked child holds it round the neck with both arms. Above in the clouds a genius, half hidden among them, covers his eyes with his arms to hide them from Phœbe's rays.



The painter has availed himself of the subject to exhaust the whole scale of greys, blues, and violets with consummate skill, and has found in them the most wonderful and subtle effects of balance of tone. It is oriental night, faintly illuminated by that lunar twilight which takes the colour out of nature—which thrills the senses like a long-drawn note on the lute—at once imploring, inviting, and melancholy.

In an excess of accuracy Baudry had the exact position of the stars in each constellation marked out for him by M. Janssen the astronomer; the terrestrial globe is seen on the American side, a delicate attention to the owner of the ceiling, Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt of New York.

Baudry rested from these large works while painting a quite small picture, carefully studied down to the minutest details, though the labour and finish were concealed by the fresh and brilliant workmanship. *Truth*, naked as befits her, has risen from the proverbial well; as she sits on the stone margin a little sprite with his back turned offers her, with evident labour, a large and heavy parcel of clothing. *Truth* is posed with one leg on the wall of the well and the other hanging down, her body slightly bent over to the right by the action of the left arm, which is stretched out and pressed against the stone she sits on, while in her right hand she holds a mirror. The figure is as graceful and harmonising as a musical cadence. A corner of blue landscape, with the black and yellow tones of the clothing, relieve the whiteness of her slender form, which is drawn with amazing freedom in spite of its regard for truth.

It would be impossible to give the most superficial idea of all the works produced by this indefatigable and fertile hand and brain. We must, however, mention a little picture of *Eve*, suggested by some of the finest lines in Hugo's *Légende des Siècles*, and a *Fellah Woman*, life-size, a water-seller he met with in the streets of Cairo and transferred at once to the canvas with all the rather coarse beauty of the genuine Egyptian race and the primitive originality of the national costume, which marks rather than conceals the form of the body. Then, as yet in his studio, there is *Salome Dancing*, a reduced replica of the painting in the Opera House; the Virgin with Christ and St. John, in which the mystery of the incarnation is suggested both by her virginal expression and her look of maternal love; *Psyche and Love*, a picture reproducing the group in Mr. Vanderbilt's great ceiling, but with some conspicuous differences and additions as to the accessories, while the treatment is skilfully adapted to the necessity of an easel picture. Then, scattered about, are portraits: *Crieri*, a little girl of eighteen months, a wonderful sketch full of life and light such as Velasquez might have painted in a happy home; the pretty bright face of a little



THE SMALLER DRAWING-ROOM.

boy; a *Mrs. L . . .* in a Rubens costume, decorative in treatment, as being intended to hang over a chimney-piece; a child astride on a chair—*A Horseback*—with a striking leonine head that cannot fail to catch the eye, warmly coloured in every tone of ruddy gold from the fairest to the darkest; *Mme. B . . . and her Son*, her son, a splendid work, treated as broadly as an historical work; and besides these drawings innumerable, cartoons for the Opera House, studies for pictures, and three little compositions familiar to all—the diploma of honour for the Great Exhibition of 1878, and the obverse and reverse of the new Bank of France note.

These are the works of Paul Baudry. Few painters, even in their ripe old age, have left a larger mass of such wonderfully various work behind them. Besides, our painter has by no means said his last word; the public are accustomed to look to him for sudden transformations and unexpected novelties; at the prime now of his strength and talent he still ought to give us many works revealing the progress and evolution of his fertile and pliant fancy. It is said that he is painting the history of the great French heroine, Joan of Arc. How will he, who is full of the eagerest patriotism, treat that noble and touching figure? How will he represent on canvas all the phases of that brief life, sacred to every true French heart? How will he show us the shepherdess of Domremy listening to the heavenly voice, the messenger of deliverance recognising the King, the invincible maid driving the English out of Orleans, the coronation at Rheims, the prison and the stake at Rouen? There is matter here for a series of dramatic compositions, especially adapted to the grand naturalistic treatment of Baudry and his lofty ideals. May we hope at last to see *Jéhanne la 'bonne Lorraine* really understood and worthily represented in art.

Let us hope too that the grand and beautiful panels which decorate the Opera may soon be rescued from inevitable and untimely end. Every evening they come out a trifle dimmer from the ruinous effects of the gas. Who is there that has not felt a spasm of regret and indignation in watching their gradual destruction—of indignation at that barbarous mode of lighting which injures more than it displays the beauties of the paintings, and of regret for those luckless works, threatened by destruction for all that they are immortal, after lingering through no more than eight years of an unhealthy existence? It is high time that they should be snatched from their perilous position in the Opera House and piously preserved in some safer shelter, away from all destructive agencies; where, indeed, they may be seen, and not lost at a height where they can neither be admired nor judged. Such an act of justice is only due to the generosity of the artist, and ought to be insisted on by French Art, which could only deplore and not repair their loss. Is this great work to be ruined for ever just when the master has risen to his greatest height—when posterity is what he must henceforth work for, and when by common consent he stands in the highest rank of contemporary Art?

CHARLES EPHRUSSI (CLARA BELL, Trans.).



SAINT JOHN

JOSEF ISRAËLS







A KITCHEN INTERIOR (Fac-simile of the Artist's Drawing).

## JOSEF ISRAËLS.

### I.



WHAT characterises the literature of our time is its *human interest*. It is true that we do not see scholars addressing scholars, but men addressing men—not that scholars are fewer, but that the reading public is more large. Authors in all ages address themselves to what interests their readers. The same things do not interest a vast community which interested half-a-score of monks or book-worms. The literary *polis* was once an oligarchy, it is now a republic. It is the general brilliancy of the atmosphere which prevents your noticing the size of any particular star. Do you not see that with the cultivation of the masses has awakened the Literature of the affections? Every sentiment finds an expositor, every feeling an oracle."

Whose words are these? The numerous readers of Lord Lytton will already have recognised the speaker; it is the father of Pisistratus Caxton, in the course of a long discussion with his friend Trevanion. In speaking thus of our epoch, he is careful to add: "By the present age I do not mean only the present day; I commence with the century." But what the old scholar so quietly remarks concerning the movement of modern

literature, we have hardly yet begun to say concerning contemporary art; hardly yet have we begun to believe that our century is not altogether unworthy of its external form perpetuated by art, of being presented to posterity by our painters, our sculptors, and our engravers. Until quite recently, such was the perversion of ideas in these matters, that art had condemned itself to live solely by the traditions of the past, and addressing itself in consequence to connoisseurs alone, had become unintelligible to the multitude,

who looked upon it as a sumptuous idol, strange and dumb, reserved for the elect few. But let no one tell us that the populace is insensible to the influence of works of art. It is never insensible when those works are conceived in a spirit sufficiently lofty to awaken the generous sentiments of humanity. A study of the works of Josef Israëls will furnish us with many examples by way of proof.

But that the general public is insensible to special beauties of execution, even when they are simple, is indisputable; much more than does it remain blind to subtleties, to refinements, to *lours de force*. Touched, to a certainty, by nobleness, or grandeur, or tenderness in the conception, it is almost or wholly indifferent to technical skill and dexterities. Now, alone in the course of intellectual manifestations, art had remained faithful to the worship of the past, in the worship of form had clung to paganism. Artists—I speak of the most illustrious among them—affected to live altogether outside our preoccupations and our speculations; they had

one dogma only, the pagan dogma of beauty. A formidable routine, which under the name of tradition had become tyrannical, governed us. It was affirmed that in certain favoured epochs—in ancient Greece for architecture and sculpture, in the sixteenth century in Italy for painting—mankind had discovered certain definitive forms of art, from which it could never again deviate without falling into decadence. The effort of each artist had for its aim to arrest art at these creations of genius, to fix it in the past, to render it immovable throughout time. However profound may be our admiration for the sublime works of a few great masters, it ought not to blind us to the fact that these types of art belong to other civilisations, and have degenerated into formulas which are out of harmony to-day with the new wants and present state of our culture.

Josef Israëls is one of those artists who have led with most authority the reaction against the traditional principle of absolute beauty. It is true that it was perhaps easier for him



VII. THE SEAMSTRESS

than it would have been for another man. As a Dutchman he had only to remain faithful to his origin, to go back to Rembrandt, that great ancestor and genius, whose individualistic art remains the most brilliant protest in history against the heroic art of Raphael and Phidias. Greek sculpture in the time of Pericles, and Roman painting under Julius II. and Leo X., sought in art only the glorification of form, which under the chisel of the sculptor and the brush of the artist, had become the privileged appanage of gods and heroes. The painter conceived the most beautiful forms under which to represent Jehovah, Jesus Christ, Mary, and the saints of the Catholic Paradise, as the sculptor had selected the most sublime for Jupiter, Apollo, Venus, and the heroes of the pagan Olympus. After an interval of twenty centuries, Raphael continued the heroic age by adapting it to the new beliefs; he prolonged the era of the marvellous immortalised by Phidias. Phidias! Raphael! Whether these two names stand for Birth or for New-Birth, they have still a meaning in common: the Youth of art.

The law of development that history and daily experience show us to be identical in the growth of societies

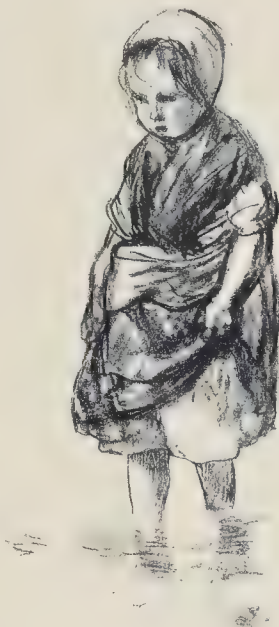


and of man, is confirmed by the history of the plastic arts as well as by that of literature. The world has never lost the memory of its own youth, of the heroic age which was only the free expression of the vigorous and superabundant strength of young humanity. The most ancient of literary forms, poetry, was in like manner, in its origin, only a manifestation of the turbulent impetuosity of man, of the exuberant forces of youth. The documents that have come down to us have preserved the stamp of the powerful imaginations that peopled the primitive legend of fables and myths conceived under the empire of the marvellous. It was then under the government of an almost fatalistic youth, that art began by glorifying matter, as a child naturally begins by exercising its limbs, and by submitting, as a child does, to the enchanting influence that the marvellous exercises over childhood.

The movement inaugurated by Luther in the sixteenth century is the first solemn triumph of human reason. It was the North that gave those first signs of vigour which announce the virility of mankind. It was in the North also that the age of reason, which closes for ever the era of the marvellous, formed an art to formulate that immense progress, slowly matured and suddenly revealed. That art, it need hardly be said, is Dutch art. Dutch art, in fact, renounces all those heroic influences still recognised by more Southern races; it rejects them, because it finds their traditions conventional and commonplace. It deserts the court and the temple, lest the hero should there be seen under the form of the monarch in his purple, of the martyr, nay, of God himself, whose face and costume are borrowed now from the goodman seen every day in all his naive vulgarity. Viewed as religious art, does not the force of this reaction carry it too far? I am of that opinion. But Dutch art is absolutely within its rights, when, to escape from officially accredited heroism, it takes refuge in the town-hall, at the civic banquet, at the archery meeting, in the tavern, at the Kermesse, at the domestic hearth, where man—not the hero—discusses the interests and does honour to the successes of his city, exercises his skill, rejoices, dances, reposes, or meditates. There it finds a spectacle which, while meeting the demands of painting, is sufficiently worthy of interpretation, since it is that of daily life. If it has renounced the beauties of form, it has discovered a source of variety which nothing can exhaust, since the spectacle is one that is renewed every day. Once for all art has entered the world of sincerity and of sentiment. It has proclaimed, in the domain of painting, the advent of the reign of human reason, of contemporary truth, of man for man.

Herein, then, lies the strength of Dutch art, herein its power for inspiring emotions, still felt after the lapse of centuries; and such was the genius of Rembrandt, as it is that of his descendant, Josef Israëls. One of the greatest thinkers of our century, whose writings on art ought to be the handbook of every artist, my illustrious master and very dear friend, John Ruskin, even he, notwithstanding the frequent strictures he passes upon the works of Rembrandt, justifies the painter of the *Resurrection of Lazarus*, and writes beforehand the apology for Israëls, in the admirable passage which I reproduce here in its entirety.

"As far as I can observe, it is a constant law, that the greatest men, whether poets or historians, live entirely in their own age; and the greatest fruits of their work are gathered out of their own age. Dante paints Italy in the thirteenth century; Chaucer, England in the fourteenth; Macaccio, Florence in the fifteenth; Tintoret, Venice in the sixteenth; all of them utterly regardless of anachronism and minor error of every kind, but getting always vital truth out of the vital present. If it be said that Shakespeare



SUMMER

wrote perfect historical plays on subjects belonging to the preceding centuries in them, but a life which all men recognise for the human life of all time—and this it is, not because Shakespeare sought to give universal truth, but because painting, honestly and completely, from the men about him, he painted that human nature which is indeed constant enough—a rogue in the fifteenth century being *at heart* what a rogue is in the nineteenth, and was in the twelfth; and an honest or knightly man being in like manner very similar to other such at any other time. And the work of these great idealists is, therefore, always universal; not because it is not *portrait*, but because it is *complete* portrait, down to the heart, which is the same in all ages. And the work of the mean idealists is not universal, not because it is portrait, but because it is *half* portrait—of the outside, the manners, and the dress, not of the heart.

Thus, Tintoret and Shakespeare paint, both of them, simply Venetian and English nature, as they saw in their time, down to the root; and it does for *all* time; but as for any care to cast themselves into the particular ways and tones of thought, or custom, of that time in their historical work, you will find it in neither of them, nor in any other perfectly great man that I know of."

This is precisely the method of Rembrandt, only Rembrandt is a still greater realist, since he does not even give himself the trouble to compose an archaic background, and simply paints, under the names of Scripture characters, the good people of his neighbourhood. It is precisely the method of Josef Israëls, only more realistic still than Rembrandt. He suppresses even the names, abstains from all pretence of history, and if he also paints his neighbours, paints them for themselves, and shows them simply and finally as they are. It is more sincere. What Josef Israëls owes to this absolute sincerity can be expressed in three words, which designate the dominant qualities of the artist: truth, simplicity, feeling.

This we shall see in considering his work in detail. But first, it may be well to say a few words

concerning his history and education, and to set down a few dates; yet what is the history of a painter but the history of his pictures? Let us limit ourselves to what is essential.



A WOMAN AT SCHEVENINGEN.

## II.

Josef Israëls was born at Groningen (in the Netherlands) in 1824. I cannot state, according to custom, that his vocation for drawing showed itself at a very early age, and that whilst still a child he covered the margins of his schoolbooks with figures. It is very possible, and even probable; but I know nothing of it. What is not doubtful is that he pursued his first course of studies in painting at the Academy of the Fine Arts in Amsterdam, under the direction of Pieneman. On leaving Pieneman, he entered the studio of Kruseman, a genre and landscape painter, belonging as much to the Belgian as to the Dutch school. The young artist completed his studies in Paris in 1846, in the studio of Picot, an historical painter of very indifferent talent, but an excellent teacher. Josef Israëls, as an evidence doubtless of his good academical education, sent to Paris, for the Universal Exhibition of 1855, an historical picture representing *William of Nassau, Prince of Orange, opposing for the first time the execution of the decrees of the King of Spain*. Nothing in this choice of subject suggests the future painter of the sea, of huts, women, children and fishermen, of Katwijk, near Leyden, that little port which was soon to become, and long to continue, the central point of the artist's

studies. However, to prove that *William of Nassau* was a picture quite worthy of interest, it would suffice to state that the work now belongs to the Musée des Amateurs of Amsterdam. I believe that Josef Israëls never again attempted an historical subject.

In fact, two years after the Universal Exhibition, he sent to the Salon of 1857, two new pictures: *The*



OLD AND WORN OUT

*Children of the Sea*, and *An Evening on the Shore*, subjects taken from the neighbourhood of Katwijk. He has discovered his path and will henceforward keep to it. To the Salon of 1861 he sent five pictures, more important than the preceding ones: *The Shipwrecked Man*, *Petit Jean*, *A Quiet House*, *Happy Old Age*, *Mother Marguerite*. All the future of the painter is in these pictures, in these fine productions of a serious and inquiring spirit, persuaded of the possibility of a modern art that, without being rude or vulgar, should have for its object the representation of contemporary life, and take its stand not only on the sentiment of reality but also on scientific execution, without which the rest is worthless. Théophile Gautier on this occasion spoke in high praise of the artist's work.

In the Salon of 1863 the artist exhibited only three pictures: *The Shepherd*, *A Katwijk Woman*, and *The Eve of the Separation*. This last work excited particular attention. It is a poor interior, kept with the sole luxury of the poor, cleanliness. The mother and child are spending some last hours beside the coffin that holds the remains of the father of the family. A sad and painful vigil! The picture is dramatic, simply and naturally dramatic, without any suggestion of melodrama. And herein lies the great art of Israëls; he knows how to touch the emotions, without ever exaggerating his effects, or unduly darkening his shadows. The drama here, profoundly painful though it be, is not sentimental in the bad sense of the word; these are real tears that we shed. It is painted soberly: the somewhat sombre tone of the picture is carefully adapted to the subject and its surroundings. At this epoch, the artist inscribed himself as a pupil of Henry Scheffer (the brother of Ary) and of François Meurer, an obscure historical painter.



ON THE BEACH



During three years he ceased to exhibit in the Paris Salon, deserting it, I believe, for the Royal Academy of London, where at the very outset he won the favour, he has always very justly preserved, of English amateurs. Of these, Mr. J. S. Forbes may be mentioned, who possesses no less than forty drawings and pictures by



LITTLE JOHNNY

Israëls, among others a large canvas entitled, *Through Darkness to Light*. It was exhibited in the Paris Salon of 1867, together with two other pictures: *The Boat*, and *Interior of the Orphan Asylum at Katwijk*. This last picture definitely established his Parisian reputation, and placed him in the foremost rank of painters of homely life. It is, in truth, a *chef-d'œuvre*. A cold daylight, the daylight of the North, penetrates through dim and narrow window panes, into a grey and brick-paved room, bare of every ornament, of every joy. Three young girls, three orphans, seated at the work-table, stitch from morning till night in this dreary atmosphere. It is a painter's picture, patiently observed, broadly executed, without any of those little "dodges" commonly seen in pictures of the school of Dusseldorf at that time. But apart from this, how touching is the sentiment, how true and humble and melancholy is the execution! The pale light illuminating this poor workshop where young girls, modestly dressed, sit and work resignedly; this striking presentation of honest labour, so full of feeling, so reticent, so simple, and hence so touching, remains in the memory of all who have seen it. The *Interior of the Orphan Asylum* belongs to his Royal Highness the Prince of Aquila. I regret to have to own that in 1866 the picture was still in the hands of the artist, and that the French Government neglected this opportunity of enriching with a *chef-d'œuvre* the Museum of the Luxembourg or that of the Louvre.

The same picture reappeared at the Universal Exhibition of 1867, accompanied by four other canvases: *The Children of the Sea*, our old acquaintance of 1857, belonging to M. C. P. van Eeghen, of Amsterdam; *The Rabbi David*, belonging to M. de Clerq; *The Last Breath*, and *A Real Comfort*, belonging to His Royal Highness the Comte de Flandre. All are scenes in which every sentiment of family and domestic life, all its sweetness and its sorrows, the noisy joyousness of childhood, the graver happiness of maternity, are interpreted each in its turn by a strong and admirably conscientious talent, and without a trace—a point on which I insist—of the lachrymose and falsely sentimental rendering of certain French artists.

I have endeavoured to give the reader who may not have seen the picture, some idea of the *Interior of the Orphan Asylum at Katwijk*. We cannot describe each of these pictures in turn: there is one, however, that more especially merits attention; it is *A Real Comfort*. What is it? Little enough, in truth; but so touching, expressed in language so clear and sober, that it is impossible to resist the emotion it excites. A mother—how often that mother re-appears in the works of Israëls, and how welcome she always is!—a young mother, weak and suffering still, hardly recovered from the fatigue of a recent birth, is seated in an arm-chair, where she leans back, softly propped by a cushion. But that is not *The Real Comfort*. *The Real Comfort* is the sight, always sweet to a mother's heart, of a little girl of twenty or



STUDY.

twenty-four months old, who busies herself about her, wishing, dear little soul, to make herself useful, and with all her strength lifts a chaufferette in both arms, carrying it with little footsteps to slip it under her mother's feet. The languid mother has let her pale hands, too feeble to support the weight of her light knitting, fall upon her knees; her tearful eyes follow every movement of the child and brighten with joy and consolation. For in this poor house there is a sorrow, discreetly indicated by the artist. The cradle of the new-born infant is placed on the ground behind the arm-chair; it is already empty; we suspect so at least from the way in which it is wrapped up and closed, and from the place that it occupies. If the little being were within, even though it were sleeping, the cradle would be under the mother's eye. And so to the depression of convalescence is added the sadness of mourning. Neither arm-chair nor cushion can be of help here. *The Real Comfort* is the child that remains. With the exception of the enchantress, Miss Kate Greenaway, I know no one who understands children so well as Josef Israëls. Whether it be clothed in serge or in satin, whether it belong to the people or to the aristocracy, to the city or to the fields, a child is the same everywhere; everywhere its games, its innocence, its grace, its naïvetés, its smiles are the same; everywhere its caresses are equally sweet to a mother's heart; everywhere its little awkwardnesses have an equal charm. And that is why I allow myself to compare the children of Kate Greenaway with the children of Josef Israëls; the little Londoners, so naturally comic in the grandmother clothes in which Kate, the fairy, dresses them, with the urchins of the rude shore of Katwijk.

At the Universal Exhibition of 1867, Israëls' success was considerable; he received a third medal, and deserved still better, and was decorated with the Legion of Honour. In 1868 and 1869, the master—for he was most undoubtedly a master now—again brought to the Salon, among the frivolities of fashionable painters, his style, at once so beautiful, so honest, sane, serious and conscientious, his tender feeling, so human and sympathetic, awakened by the joys and the griefs that have their centre in the hearths of the poor, as by the hard labours of the struggle of life; here *Fishermen disembarking*; there *The Sleepers*. What a charming picture is that of *The Sleepers*! All the family is out-of-doors, on the sea or in the fields; the house is deserted; only the grandmother remains at home; and in the silence and solitude, in the overcoming heat of the summer day, the windows closed, the curtains drawn, she has fallen asleep in her chair after her frugal meal; sleeper the first. The other sleeper is an old cat, who also has her chair and her place at the fire, by the side of the grandmamma. By a singular coincidence, in this same Salon of 1868, Mr. Alma-Tadema had a picture upon a similar theme, but carried back, according to his custom, to the times of pure Greek beauty. Of course, I esteem at its true worth the industry and the work of Mr. Alma-Tadema, but I am more nearly touched by the inspiration of Josef Israëls. The sentiments expressed by him are those of my own race, of my own brothers. And so are the others, it will be said. Possibly; but this pseudo-Greek nose, this masquerade of the peplos, chills and embarrasses me. And I cannot perceive that the representation of reality injures in any way the qualities of the painter in Israëls. On the contrary, I find in all these themes of domestic intimacy and family simplicity the handling of a master learned and severe as he is sincere and naïf.

I continue the enumeration of the pictures sent by the master of Katwijk to the Salons of Paris, pictures sufficient in number to give us a good idea of his work. From 1868 to 1873, nothing; but in 1873 one picture, *Preparations for the Future*. In 1874 and 1875, again nothing. But in 1876 one picture, *A Village Interior*; in 1877, two pictures, *Portrait of Mlle. E. . . .* and *The Faithful Comrades*. In 1878, the third Universal Exhibition, there were four pictures: *Alone in the World*, *The Village Poor*, belonging to Mr. G. Webster of



OLD MOTHER MARGUÉRITE

London; *The Cobbler's Dinner*, belonging to Mr. MacGavin of Glasgow; and *The Anniversary*, belonging to Mr. W. Fenton of Rochdale. It was curious to remark in these picture galleries of the Champ de Mars how faithfully the Dutch painters, as a rule, hold to their national traditions. They have none of the dryness of their neighbours, the Belgian painters; but neither are their aims so high. Not a single attempt at historical painting was to be found in the salon appropriated to Holland. The representation of contemporary life, which in Belgium, and even in France, is found by exception only, is there universal. The humour is a trifle heavy, when any is shown at all; but an attempt at broad comedy is rare, and hardly to be met with except in the deplorable pictures of David Bles. The general tendency is melancholy, even sad. Josef Israëls expresses it after a fashion at once complete and elevated. No more tender soul could be found, or one more filled with compassion for the miseries of the poor—since this is the point on which we must always insist—for the condition of women especially, for their patient and ill-requited labour, for the bitter griefs of widowhood, striking not only heart and soul, but at the very means of existence—for the family festivals too, which a mere trifle suffices to enliven, be it merely a panful of fritters. But besides all this—and this above all is essential—Israëls is other and better than a mere painter of sentiment; he is, properly speaking, and without any other qualifying title, a painter. It is, in fact, by no means sufficient that a man should have sentiment to become a great artist; he must be capable of interpreting his sentiment in an eloquent and picturesque style. And Josef Israëls succeeds in communicating the emotion that he feels by an extremely individual method of work. He draws as a painter; that is to say, he carefully avoids emphasizing an outline. His figures are defined by the surrounding air and light, by the due balance of tones, by the delicacy of the half-tints in the soft chiaroscuro of



FROM DAY TO DAY.



THE BOAT.

his shadowy interiors. His style has a certain affinity with that of Tassaert; in Holland—and not in Holland only—he may be regarded as the founder of a school. For whilst excellent artists like MM. Méis and A. Artz openly recognise him as their master, I strongly suspect that Max Liebermann, of Berlin, has often and carefully studied the painting of Josef Israëls. I would even hazard the opinion that it is to this intelligent study that the young German artist owes some of the best qualities of his talent.

The success gained by the Katwijk painter's pictures in the Universal Exhibition of 1878 greatly surpassed that of 1867. The international jury awarded him a medal of the first class, and promoted him to the rank of Officer in the Order of the Legion of Honour. Nevertheless, during the two succeeding years the artist sent nothing to the Salon. He returned to it in 1881 with two pictures, *Nothing more* and *The Sewing School at Katwijk*, this last being one of the principal pictures in the Amsterdam Exhibition of 1883. In 1882, one picture only, but an admirable one, was forwarded to the Paris Salon: *Silent Company*, belonging to Mr. J. S. Forbes. How much is there not expressed in this mute exchange of thoughts between the man and the dog; and how thoroughly it enables

one to understand and to share the hope expressed by the illustrious Ruskin, in one of his recent lectures at Oxford, when, speaking of the Resurrection, he observes, that the "Kingdom in which there shall be no more Death, neither sorrow nor crying," will be inherited not by man alone, but also "by the lower creatures, for whom it is inconceivable that any good should be the final goal of ill."

Finally, in 1883, two more pictures are sent to bear witness to the perennial freshness of the artist's



imagination: *The Sleeping Child*—one of those shadowy, peaceful interiors of which we shall speak farther on, in treating of the master's etchings—and *Fine Weather*, a gay and luminous picture, full of light and air, where, wandering among the fields, we see two village lovers, honest, timid, and pure, who with delightful awkwardness mutely offer the exchange of their hearts in silent vows. The administration of the Beaux Arts had wisely intended to buy this last picture for the Museum of the Luxembourg; unfortunately, it was no longer the property of the master. If anything could console the artistic French public for a mishap which can only be an adjournment, it would be the hope that the choice of the government will fall next year upon a picture whose subject is an interior. I grant that in either a public or private gallery, where several pictures by the same master can be collected together, the talent of that master should be displayed under the most various



SILENT COMPANY.

aspects, but if one must resign one's self to possess one work only by the artist, it is of the first necessity that that single work should be characteristic not only of his talent, but also—I say it in the best sense of the word—of his manner. Now, with whatever perfection Israëls may render his open-air subjects, it is, to my mind, his painting of interiors which gives the most complete measure of his qualities as a painter as well as of his genius for observation; it is in these that he displays to its fullest extent his admirable skill in painting shadow and light; it is in these that we recognise without hesitation the true descendant of Rembrandt; nor is there any one in the least acquainted with contemporary art who, coming across one of these pictures of an interior, does not, as he recognises more clearly and more completely than elsewhere, the impression of the artist's individuality, at once exclaim, "This is an Israëls!" And that is precisely what is wanted in a museum.

## III.

Although the Paris Salon has been privileged to receive a large number of Josef Israëls' pictures, all of them have not been exhibited there. It was to the Royal Academy of London that he sent, in 1875, *Waiting for the Herring Boats*, women and children waiting on the shore under a dirty sky, in true harmony with the subject; and *Returning from the Fields*—a low-toned landscape, peasants in heavy sabots returning home in the evening light, two of them bringing back potatoes in their wheel-barrows. Besides those exhibited in London



THE KNITTER. I. W. KAIZER. 1875.

and in Paris, many pictures which have not appeared in either of those cities are dispersed in various private collections. Fortunately, a dozen of these compositions have been reproduced by engraving or by lithography, thanks to the care of Messrs. Buffa and Son, of Amsterdam. Two of the lithographs were executed by Morcelleron, at the time when he was residing in Amsterdam to make his fine lithograph of *The Night Patrol*. The first of these lithographs reproduces *The Cradle*, two little girls standing at the edge of the sea, with the water up to their ankles; the elder is washing and brushing with a vigorous hand the wicker cradle of the younger, who with her hands behind her back stands watching her, holding between her fingers a string attached to a little boat roughly carved out of a block of wood. The second, entitled *Symptoms of Love*, represents the interior of a fisherman's house; a young girl is seated on a window-ledge, her legs hanging, her arms modestly crossed upon her neckerchief; she is looking kindly at a young sailor seated upon a wooden bench, who lifts his eyes towards her with a loving glance, and turns between his fingers a betrothal-ring, which he timidly shows her, with a look of interrogation. Two other lithographs are by M. Dekker, and, like the first, introduce us to scenes of the homely life of the sea-coast. *The First Step*: a calm sea, at low tide; a boat anchored at a little distance. A fisherman, with turned-up trousers and the water up to his knees, advances towards the shore, holding out both arms to a little girl, who, with a charmingly natural movement, hesitates before wetting her feet. *The Return*: in the background, the sea; in front, seated on the ground at the threshold of a cottage, a young woman points out to the child she holds on her knee the father coming home, his legs and feet bare, carrying his sabots in one hand, in the other a fish.

The engravings are eight in number; the themes are very cleverly selected to attract the general public.

1. *The Knitter*, engraved by I. W. Kaizer. A single figure; a charming young girl stands at the rose-covered door of a cottage; her fair hair escapes from under her little net cap and floats upon her shoulders; her caught-up skirt shows her bare feet and her pretty flowered under-petticoat.

2. *A Poor Flower*, engraved by H. Sluyter. One of those interiors which I should like to see at the Luxembourg. In front of the closed window looking out upon the village stands a young girl pouring water from a copper jar on to a pot of flowers. Beside her, on the same table, more flowers are soaking their stalks in a vase of transparent glass. Small curtains are drawn across the lower half of the window, intercepting the light, and producing very singular effects of light upon the table.

3. *The Fisherman of Zandvoort*, engraved by G. H. Sluyster. The sea, and a black and stormy sky; the fisherman, with a gloomy countenance, is returning with long strides, carrying on his left arm a little girl seated on heavy nets, and holding with the right hand a boy of some twelve years old, who hurries his steps also, looking up with anxiety into his father's troubled face. The group is passing near a poor grave marked by a large wooden cross, fixed in the sand, with a rustic enclosure overgrown by weeds, lashed by the sea breezes.

4. *The Orphans*; the engraver's name is omitted. A poverty-stricken interior; in the midst, an old grandmother seated on a chair, bowed beneath the weight of sorrow. She looks vaguely before her, without seeing anything. Upon her knee she holds a young child, and with her left arm embraces and draws to her heart a somewhat older girl. An empty bowl which has, perhaps, not been filled, is on the table. The light falls through a window, in front of which is a sideboard, with here and there some household utensil, an upright plate, a coffee-mill, a candlestick, and an apple.

5. *The Fisherman's Children*, engraved by H. Sluyster. A fine day, the sea at low tide, a boat anchored near the shore. The fisherman, who has remained on board, watches the return of a young lad, who, smiling and proud, carries his gleeful little sister, accustomed no doubt to this kind of sport, on his shoulders.

6. *The First Walk*, engraved by H. Sluyster. A grassy enclosure, surrounded by palings. A charming young mother walks bending slightly forward, and guiding with her hand the first steps of a child in a little shirt and nightcap. Beyond, other enclosures are seen, where linen is drying, bounded by a row of houses with thatched roofs.

7. *Before the Meal*, engraved by D. J. Sluyster. An interior. Before the window looking out upon a narrow street stands a table with a bowl of smoking potatoes. On each side are the guests; to the right the son upon a chair, his arms stretched out, his hands clasped; to the left the mother in her arm-chair, her hands upon her knees. They are saying the Benedicite. A work of exquisite feeling and masterly painting.

8. *The True Support*, engraved by D. J. Sluyster. We have already described this picture in speaking of those sent by Israël to the Universal Exhibition of 1867.

It is sufficient to add that engraving lends a singular softness to all these subjects.

Like all born painters, Josef Israël was seized one day with a passion for etching. Had he by chance received that day the proof of some black line-engraving or of some lithograph executed after one of his pictures? Had it occurred to him that the habitual interpreters of his artistic inspirations, however clever they might be—even, one might say, too clever—had modified the character of his works in softening their ruggedness, caressing the metal or the stone with so much care and conscientious love that the element of strength in his art had disappeared in the painstaking work of the graver and lithographic chalk? Had he said to himself, in short, that if the general public showed a marked predilection for the suavity, the sweetness and grace, the *prellinesses* of his compositions thus transformed, there must, nevertheless, exist along with the general public a certain number of true amateurs who, caring for truth as he cared for it, would not be repelled by the rough fidelity of his art, less charming but more profound in sentiment, less perfect but more healthy in tone, less seductive but more truly felt? Whether Israël did in fact reflect thus I know not, but I could easily believe it. This much is certain, when once his determination was taken, he set to work on the copper plate with a boldness verging on rashness, with a contempt for all ordinary processes and details, without any special method or choice of tools, in utter inexperience and with the vehement clumsiness of a child, scratching out, cracking the varnish, putting in wrong lines, spots, and holes with the most



FINE WOODEN THE BOY



extraordinary recklessness. It was like the work of a man in a rage, who has declared war against all mechanical facilities and finish.

In this way he produced the small etchings which have never come into the market, but which connoisseurs can procure from the artist; one, somewhat larger, now in the hands of M. Charles Delorière, and two large ones which belong to Messrs. Arnold and Tripp, Paris. Some of these etchings are copies of pictures by the artist; others are original compositions, invented as he drew. Some of these the painter has since worked up into pictures; for instance, *The Sleeping Child*, exhibited in the Paris Salon in 1883. This represents an interior full of soft shadow, silence, and coolness, in contrast to the fierce heat outside, which is seen in a broad ray of sunshine falling on the end of a table, and on the figure, against the light, of a mother holding her sleeping child in her arms. I know of no more delightful picture of homely peace during the hour when the husband is away toiling on the sea or in the fields. But the daily life of the poor may be seen at every hour in Israëls' works. In another etching we have a mother with the child in her arms, standing in a rough balcony, and watching for the bread-winner's return; here we see her back only, a strong silhouette against the sky. In another the child is alone, sleeping in his cradle under the guardianship of the faithful dog who is the playmate of his waking hours. Two other etchings show us the children. In one they are sitting on the dry stunted grass, gazing at the sea, drinking in its vastness with their eyes, and dreamily watching the white sails that cross the horizon; in the other a boy and a girl are playing on a boat at low tide. Our excellent friend the late M. Duranty, a man of exquisite taste and keenly alive to all that is beautiful—well known, too, to the readers of "Modern Artists" as having written the biography of Mr. Millais, R.A., particularly admired this plate. "The vast extent of sea," he said, "and the variety of its surface are rendered with very great delicacy and accuracy, and by the simplest means. We feel the all-pervading greyness of tone, relieved by a central spot of colour; and the children at play are a striking contrast to the broad expanse of ocean vouchsafing to allow them, as it were, for once



MONSIEUR JEAN.



THE CHILD IN THE CRADLE.

to trifle on the skirts of its terrible majesty." Here, again, is the sea, a calm and smiling sea, which has charmed the gaze of the woman seated on the sands, her basket on her shoulder, in such a speaking attitude of weariness. Look, now, at this singular plate, showing us the domestic life of two old folks, a man in bed in a sort of cupboard, a woman sitting by a chest under the pendulum of a clock hung against the wall and facing the window. A strange piece of workmanship, that looks as if it had been etched with a punch, and reminds us of the dotted work of the year 1400. Three other etchings complete the set of ten small ones: a noble profile of a woman, massively treated with long strokes of the needle; a profile of a child in a nightcap, with a lock of light hair falling over the forehead, forcibly modelled in a high light; and an old woman with a wrinkled face, peaceful and calm, "wrapped in velvety shadow," as Duranty used to say, and recalling Rembrandt's old women, especially the portrait of his mother.

The larger plate belonging to M. Delorière is called *La Soupe*. The effect is less forced, but the execution is clean and crisp. It represents a lad sitting on a straw chair, gravely peeling potatoes; he is

putting them into an earthenware dish, which a solemn little girl holds on her knees with both hands while she sits on a wooden stool. The background is filled with various objects and utensils—a basket, a pair of sabots, a rough table with a copper pot, a cloth, and a wooden bowl with a spoon in it.

In working at these eleven small etchings, Joseph Israël had gained a knowledge of the process and the experience he needed for his own purposes, not that of the professional engraver. Sure, now, of his own manipulation and of the use of his tools, quite sure—long since—of his ideas and intention, he set to work on a larger scale, and executed the two fine plates which are now the property of Messrs. Arnold and Tripp, *The Smoker* and *The Fisherman*.

In the first the figure of the man who is about to light his pipe with a brand is distinguished by the firm breadth of touch and its astonishing vitality of attitude and action. The second is a reproduction of a figure exhibited at Amsterdam in 1883. I am only sorry that the publishers of the etching should not have retained the suggestive title given to the painting by the artist: *The Struggle for Life*—"De Strijd om het Bestaan."

It is only a single figure, but it is full of tragic power—as terrible as the most terrible of Jean François Millet's peasants. The fisherman is making his way through the heavy tossing waves with a sloping thrust; leaning on his shoulder is the long stick of a dredging-net which he is pushing before him with both hands. He is going slowly and with laborious difficulty, shoving up the sand under the water, and gathering in his net shrimps, little crabs, shells, and small shore-fishes. Behind, the mighty threatening sea fills up the canvas, all but a tiny strip of frowning sky. The man is alone,—crushed by the thought of his barren labours, singlehanded in the fight with the terrible and treacherous waters, hardly clutching his living and that of the wife and child who are waiting for him at home, from Nature, their grudging stepmother—struggling for life. This masterly etching is, in our opinion, Israël's *chef-d'œuvre* in that line, and in every respect a first-rate piece of work.

With regard to Israël's etching, our well-known colleague, Mr. Philip Gilbert Hamerton, has published in his interesting work, "Etchings and Etchers," some remarks so perfectly in accordance with our own views on the subject, that we cannot do better than quote them for the benefit of the reader.

"In his etching there is a carelessness of drawing and a want of skill in biting which indisposed me towards



THE SMOKER

them when they were first sent to me, but since that time their merits have become more apparent and their defects obtrude themselves less. The truth is, that in these days of abundantly clever manual work, we get so much accustomed to it, that any shortcoming in that respect is apt to offend us; whereas, if we look with unprejudiced eyes at the work of the old masters, we find abundant instances of such shortcoming. The bad etchings of Israëls are not worse than the bad etchings either of Ruysdael or Rembrandt, whilst he has qualities of his own which no other artist possesses. Even his very technical carelessness, though it offends us at first, is as much a merit in the etching of a painter as a defect, because an artist who thinks only of the results, and is indifferent to the means, arrives at his intellectual aim through many a petty technical failure; whilst he who stops to gain manual success may forget the work of the mind. Certainly, it is not always the most faultless work that is the

best worth having. Plates that are half spoiled, that are pitted, or ill bitten, are often interesting, whilst other plates which have been finished throughout with the industry of a perfect craftsman have simply nothing to say to us."

I do not entirely agree with Mr. Hamerton's opinion on the last point. Independently of the interest of the subject of Israëls' pictures, the technical qualities of the painting are such as must have made the artist famous if he had no other merit to rely on. No painter has more thoroughly mastered all the secrets of chiaroscuro. Though his art may not be of the kind that appeals to simpering ladies, it may rank with that of the great masters; and his robust, firm, broad use of the brush can hold its own by the side of any painting in any collection in Europe. At the same time, I can gladly admit that the moral feeling of his works adds greatly to their value in my estimation—their "human interest," as old Caxton calls it, "human sympathy," as Mr. Hamerton has it. I like to compare Mr. Hamerton's judgment with that of Duranty, who in this respect certainly sounds the right



THE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.

note: "The painter of whom we are speaking," he wrote in 1879, "is one of the most interesting artists of the present day. It is nevertheless a singular fact that the juries of the Salon in these late years have treated him very much worse than those of some years since—singular, but not incomprehensible. Mere technical cleverness has achieved brilliant tricks of effect within these few years in France, Spain, and above all in Italy; and this kind of cleverness is what most people—artists as well as the public—are disposed to regard as the highest evidence of superior talent. An artist whose feeling and purpose are deep enough to allow him to disdain these petty tricks of technical skill, and devote himself to stamping his work with strong and true sentiment—to subordinate the workmanship of the picture to the expression of his feeling in his work as a whole; a single-minded Poet, who can lend dignity to the representations of humble persons and common



things; an Artist—rare indeed—who is really devoted to a certain class of subjects, of scenes, of impressions, simply because they have so taken possession of him that he knows every secret of the truth about them; a Man who has felt something for himself in the life and nature around him, who has something to say about them that others cannot say and who dares to say it; finally, and above all, a startling blow to our French habits of dress and proprieties—a Painter who objects to varnish his pictures; all these traits have combined to prevent this great artist's talents gaining among us the reputation it deserves. None, indeed, but those who are true artists themselves can find in his pictures the mysterious password of the artists' masonic craft." In this quotation from Duranty, I dwell chiefly on these words: "A Man who has something to say that others cannot say." This is the secret by which Israëls sets us free from the crushing tyranny of the past.

## IV.

Does this mean that we are insensible to the merits of the masters gone before? Far from it. It is in the name of our admiration for their work that we feel bound to protest against their imitators. Their genius is apparent in the touching simplicity with which they have transcribed for us their reading of life, its joys and sorrows, with all the perfection they could command; have revealed their secret ideal, and shown us the spirit of man in his acts and deeds—in short, man's part in social life. The old town-halls of Flanders, the cathedral at Strasburg, and the Parthenon must always move us strongly. These monuments of architecture have retained their æsthetic influence because they are the genuine outcome of the men who looked on at their building. It is a fragrant essence, as it were, inherent in all great creations of art, and which they can never lose. But as models, on the other hand, even if they were copied stone for stone, their moral vitality has evaporated, their virtue is gone out of them; the emotion, the perfume, are lost.



THE STUDIO PORCH (Drawn by Isaac Israëls).

The public is tired of our modern Art. Why? Because our artists have repelled by their exclusiveness, by the narrowness of their views, by persisting in referring all art to the standard of tradition and of technical qualities which can only appeal to those who have had a special training. As though all that pertains to man, and above all an image or picture—the simplest exercise of his intellectual activity—ought not to be intelligible to all men. But no; Art, high Art, at any rate has been hedged in and treated as an occult science, to be revealed only to the initiated; and the outside public, once fairly driven off, has not chosen to return. This is but justice. What then has happened? The artists, left alone on their sublime heights, have, one after another, pulled off their high-priests' robes, packed away the paraphernalia of their sham high Art in the vestry, and come down from their chill Parnassus into the valleys of humanity. They have turned their backs on that heroic realm which their eyes could not behold as they gazed at it through the spectacles of their forefathers, and come into the everyday life of the drawing-room, the attic, or the street, the world of incident and anecdote. Some have recourse to meretricious elegance, some seek inspiration in the gutter—all try to win a smile, a look, from the public they formerly scorned. Every grace is displaced, the utmost technical skill, prodigious cleverness, marvellous sleight of hand, all that is supposed to constitute talent, but it is all worthless, unhealthy; there is no truth, no faith in it. Now it is truth and faith that make Israëls so great.

Let our painters return to simplicity and truth. Instead of stooping to clap-trap, instead of appealing to the jaded tastes or even the baser appetites of a narrow circle, let them speak to the public at large, and invite them to share the pleasures, to discern the serious purpose of sincere, pure-minded, and manly Art. In order to revive a general feeling for statuary and painting, the first thing is to make the people understand that though Art requires no doubt a monopoly of certain talents in the artist, who must be endowed with special gifts, favoured and cultivated by long and patient study, an intelligent enjoyment of Art is in no sense a monopoly of privilege. The Artists themselves must also realise the truth that Art for a select few is a contradiction in terms, almost a monstrosity; that Art, being a human faculty, is a language which all the men of one race

ought to understand by nature. Let us be quit of the shackles put upon us by this anomaly, which is quite a modern birth, of which neither antiquity, nor the Middle Ages, nor the Renaissance ever dreamed.

This severance between Art and the people had its origin in Italy, in the academies founded after the great movement in the sixteenth century. It crystallised and took shape when formulas were first admitted; when traditions, conventionalities, and rules took the place of a frank and genuine utterance of the artist's feelings. From that time it has widened constantly, and now the divorce is complete. Some time and somehow it must be remedied. Let us, then, endeavour to reconcile the contending parties instead of fomenting their differences. The only possible ground on which they can be brought to agree is that of truth. Which ever way we turn—in Art as in everything else—our intellectual life is inseparably bound up with the pursuit of truth. Now truth is only to be found by resolute search and a complete neglect of all ready-made formulas. We must shake off all numbing formalism, all the dull inertia of the ruminant animal. Our daily warning as we rise with the dawn should be in the words of Scripture: "Woe unto you that are full!"



THE GARDEN. Drawn by Isaac Israëls.

At what fountain-head, then, may we hope to quench our thirst for truth? Nowhere but at that perennial spring which is always open to us, which waits for us; invites us, for ever pure and nourishing; the wholesome stream, whose waters of regeneration Israëls has drunk of incessantly without diminishing their flow—Nature. The artist must always study Nature. How trite the precept! Is there a single teacher who has not repeated it till it has become a platitude? And yet none but the great masters have really understood it and acted on it. That is what made them great masters. Shall we ever follow their example and return to a practical and honest study of Nature? If the principle could be disputed there would, no doubt, be a handful of bold spirits determined to act upon it; unfortunately it is so obvious, so simple and true, that it is absolutely commonplace. Everybody knows it and asserts it; it has been so often stated by the very artists whose works and teaching have

been the most manifest contradiction of their words that it must seem rash indeed to found any hopes of new life on such a basis. How is it, in fact, that while every artist who teaches at all recommends the study of Nature, the number of really original workers is so small? This lack of individuality arises from the fact that professors of Art cherish in their memory a certain ideal of traditional beauty, to which they constantly revert in spite of the precepts they themselves inculcate; and to this ideal they insist on referring every model, of



ISRAELS' HOUSE, SEEN FROM THE PARK (Drawn by Isaac Israëls).

whatever type, that Nature sets before their eyes. All their *vis viva*, so to speak, their example, their implied opinions, the admiration of great works which they require too soon of their pupils, their feeling for form founded on traditional types, with no true relation to Nature; all this tends to engraft itself on the mind of their disciples; and for this reason the pupil, unless he is endowed with exceptional energy, loses all originality of conception, or if he is a sympathetic pupil, takes up with his master's originality at secondhand.



For the last three centuries, and in the nineteenth century more than at any other period, any faithful and genuine study of Nature is choked by the traditions of the past, and these traditions are used to crush us instead of serving as examples of an early striving after liberty, which is what they really were. Nature and the infinite variety of types which she daily creates afresh under our hand have been pronounced worthless by comparison with a foregone ideal, which is admirable no doubt, but only admirable in the hands of the masters



THE STUDIO. A DUTCH INTERIOR. DECEMBER. 1840.

who first conceived it, and false and out of place in those of their imitators; nay, absolutely fatal from the moment when that conception, at first genuine and noble, has become public property, and under the specious aspect of tradition, has sunk into the depths of conventionality, of routine, of commonplace; a sort of waste ground where the disinherited sons of genius pluck lank seedlings, and wan and faded blossoms lie crushed under the footsteps of every wanderer in the field of Art.

Every race was rich in characteristic types. We need only look at Israels; every nation, every town, I might almost say every village, had its own. The human frame was infinite in variety, and its very variety was delightful. The sky, the trees, the land, the water, men, and animals were in no two places exactly alike in form and colour. And in this vain dream of Unity in Art, everything was reduced to the same standard. The human form particularly, which we know best and love most—our neighbour, our brother—instead of lifting it



THE STUDIO (NORTH) (Drawn by Isaac Israëls).

to the dignity of the grand realism of the great masters, we now torture and deform till we have forced it, willy-nilly, into the mould in which the antique Greek type was cast—a thing of beauty in itself—or the Roman models of the Renaissance. Modern Art has been crushed under the weight of these two giants, and aspiration has been diverted into barren admiration for two great geniuses, Phidias and Raphael. What a race of slaves are the modern artists! Is not their baker's wife as good as Raphael's? And yet they will not see that it lies with them to make of her a *Fornarina*.



This extraordinary wrong-headedness in an art which ought to be cosmopolitan, this poisoning of the fountain-head by servile admiration, is one of the strangest phenomena in the history of the human intelligence. But Phidias and Raphael, Velasquez and Rubens, all the masters that we imitate and copy, have themselves, in their great works, set us the example of a direct study of Nature. Far from being responsible for the errors of their imitators, they have pronounced the verdict against them beforehand. We must not accuse those great men of the past, but the purblind disciples who have derived such false lessons from their works. The great masters must be left unattained. They stand there in all their grandeur to show us what heights genius may scale if a man is content to express himself by means of that marvellous alphabet of tone, form, colour, and character which we sum up in the word Nature. If, like Israël, we seek the true meaning of their work, we shall see that it was fact, and not tradition, that gave them the key to the spring of the emotion we feel, to the realm of religious feeling and heroic passion. This emotion, which is purely sympathetic, is no doubt less vivid than our spontaneous emotions are; but it is nobler inasmuch as it is more disinterested.

A work of Art in the hands of a great master, taking account, as it must, of nothing but the essential and specific character of things—their typical symbol, as it were—is for this very reason superior to Nature itself. By thus producing *formulas* of synthetical types they have revealed the secret of their strength. They do not say to their successors: "Now do what we have done;" they say: "Now do as we did. Find out and realise from the truths you may see the things which we realised from the truths we were familiar with."

Why then, faint hearts, submit to be taken in tow? The great men who lived before you have not said everything, nor could they say everything; and yet are we never to hear a new truth? Will you still keep silence, or repeat till we are weary of them the old tunes of our forefathers—while life and song surround you on all sides, while the soul of man still has its wonderful gifts of impression, and nature, which is its instrument, its glorious powers of expression, always fresh and new, without ever repeating themselves? It is very evident that Phidias and Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Rembrandt, Beethoven and Rossini, had nothing in common but the one great principle which comprehends every law of Art: So to interpret the human soul by Nature as to give the fullest play to all its power and capabilities, latent or revealed, and to all its beauties, visible or potential, conspicuous or occult. This it was which led each of them to create a type out of specific characters. Each in his turn appropriated the characteristic *accidents* of life as he saw them, as fate brought them within the apprehension of his senses. This is the secret of the emotional connection between the symphonies of Beethoven and the pictures of the great northern masters. Think for a moment of the dance of peasants in the Pastoral Symphony—a dance of Titans; think of the mighty tempests, the struggling light and shade in fifty other great compositions. We can find in these all the fire, the startling power, the heroic tumult, and the gorgeous colouring of Rubens, the dripping skies and melancholy atmosphere of Ruysdael, or the tragical effects of light and gloom which give his stamp to Rembrandt.

Thus, we see, it is literally true that every nation, province, and family—that every man—even, includes within himself the specific elements of a type which only waits for the eye of an artist to stand revealed. I do not mean that a painter should never represent those grand historic dramas which appeal not only to this or that nationality, but to the whole civilised world—the great events of religious growth for instance, or Attila spurning perishing empires under his horse's hoof. But how many artists are there in any one generation, how many men, whose culture, study, philosophical mind and historical imagination can carry them away, in spite of themselves, so to speak, through these stupendous vistas, or who, even then, can feel sure that while they paint their visions they are revealing a new truth and not a stale platitude? Their number is so small that we may leave them out of court. They are the painters of humanity at large, not of a group or race, and genius is free to soar. But those who have not the winged heels of genius, but wear the leaden soles of tradition and yet persist in panting through space—they must be warned, again and again and in every key, that they are wasting themselves in barren effort, when their share in the work yet to be done might still be a grand one. But they know it not, because they do not know themselves. And yet no very great amount of labour is needed to discover in any man, particularly in any artist, a fund of originality unknown to himself, perhaps, or misunderstood. If they would but search their reserve stores they would find a mass of records of nature—sheafs slowly gathered together of ears gleaned day by day, laid by unconsciously and heedlessly left there as in a forgotten sanctuary. They think cheaply of these stores of observation, perhaps because they are their own—a treasure amassed in leisure hours, to be a precious possession in hours of productive thought. To bring them out and



dare to look at them by the light of day, might in itself be a stroke of genius. But it would almost seem as if our artists tried, on the contrary, to disguise their real selves, and blushed to be the men they are; as if they were ashamed of the idea that lies at their core. But, after all, what is this idea? What is its history and its origin? Are they ashamed of their nationality, their language, their climate, their native soil, the blood that they have inherited? It is a criminal weakness, almost base treason against themselves. We may be grateful to Israëls for not having sinned in this kind.

What pedant has taught the landscape-painters of the north that the softened tones of their tile-roofed houses, shrouded in the mists of their canals, are less beautiful than the sheen of marble temples half hidden



THE STUDIO (SOUTH).

among oleanders? Or is it not perhaps altogether their own fault? It is that in the eyes of the artist, as in those of the man of science, the fall of a grain of sand down a slope is insignificant in comparison with the crash of an avalanche on a mountain-side. "Move me to love," said Chateaubriand, "and you will see that a lonely apple-tree beaten by the wind and sloping over a wheat-field in La Beaune, an arrow-head in blossom in the midst of a bog, a rivulet across a road, all or any of those trifles bound up with memories, will answer to the magic touch of my secret happiness or the sadness of my regret." Once more then I say: trust your own emotional instincts. If we know beforehand to what school or clique you belong, all you have to tell us and the very terms in which you will say it, your work has no interest for us; it has lost its savour. But we want you to know your own value, and to believe that it is good value. Bow down no longer before the masters of a past time, nor to

those who are your contemporaries, your inferiors perhaps in merit, outstripping you by sheer audacity. Cease to affect these timid airs, like bashful souls slinking along under the wall with downcast eyes, or doubtful *parvenus* who dare not recognise their poor relations. Take your mother by the hand, love her all the more for her poverty's sake, and even if she be dressed in serge proclaim to an astonished and delighted world, "Behold my mother!" That is to say, own your nationality and your country.

Artists now pay too much respect to the superfine amateur public. They should cease to care for them, and then they will be sure to care for Art. An artist's task is not simply to please—he must satisfy himself; then, besides having that conscious satisfaction in his own work, he will infallibly please others as well. If you say that society does not appreciate marked individuality, and types whose strong relief is too violent a contrast to the dead level of character, I reply: No; frivolous society perhaps does not. But why should the artist care? Does that alarm him; need his eyes sink before its ridicule? Such fear is fatal; the monster will seize him and devour him. Let him rather fix his gaze on the creature's eye and face it boldly; it will flatter and cringe at his feet. His spirit will have quelled it.

These reflections apply not merely to the artist as an independent individual, but quite as much to national Art, for a nation is only a collective individuality. Nations have a personal genius which must find utterance, and can only do so by the medium of Art. Any people which can thus utter itself and fails to do so sins by omission—commits a sort of tacit larceny, and deprives humanity of some portion of its common patrimony.

In the confusion and disorder which prevail in Art, the sole resource of the nations is for each to be true to itself; to assert its tastes and aversions, and every feeling which, being its own, is, so far, sacred. The whole world will lend an ear to this solemn confession—to all that the nations may tell of their atmosphere and their soil, their habits and their needs, their worship, their history and their hopes, their whole physical and spiritual existence, their public and private life.

It is because he has done this bravely, loyally, and honestly, "without fear and without reproach," that Josef Israëls is so great a master.

ERNEST CHESNEAU (CLARA BELL, trans.).



ON THE PLACH

ADOLF F. E. MENZEL







SPLÜGEN.

## ADOLF F. E. MENZEL



THE painter who is the subject of this paper is one of the greatest of living artists. Some time hence, when he is no longer among us—and as late, no doubt, as possible—the world will agree to recognise him as a master, and he will take his place among those whom the common consent of mankind proclaims immortal.

Menzel's art, though it bears the unmistakable stamp of the nineteenth century, need fear nothing from the vagaries of fashion; it is based on the sure rock of truth; not mere conventional realism, but the truth of nature which Time as he passes may touch with his wing, but can never change. Costume will alter, ideas will vary, artistic feeling will be guided into new channels—it matters not; the works of the great German will survive, a perfect presentment of the human form in all its variety of types, revealing the character and habits of mind imposed upon it, no less by diversity of social functions and intellectual development than by difference of race. No artist has ever pierced through the outer crust of human nature more effectually than Menzel. With magical insight he knows the secret of our faintest wrinkles, of every detail of our mould and growth; in them he reads our thoughts, our temper, mood, state of health—all we do and all we feel; in short, the past and present of each individual, from which his future may be deduced. Nor does the coat conceal the inner man from his scrutiny; on the contrary, it supplies fresh material for diagnosis. In every fold, in every set of the garment, he detects a symptom of the wearer's case; his eye takes them in with infallible certainty, and his hand notes them down in a few eloquent and masterly strokes.

The Natural History of man, as it is written by this inexorable observer, is not, however, to everybody's taste. Is this to be wondered at? We do not love to see ourselves as we are, and sincerity is the last quality we

are inclined to forgive in a painter. Menzel cannot disguise

the truth; he paints us as he sees us. Is it any fault of his if Apollos are scarce among men, and if the women of to-day—even the prettiest—have but few points of resemblance to an antique Venus? These synthetic types of beauty were not conceived of Nature, and born perfect into the world; they were the offspring of the Greek spirit, and the æsthetic side of Menzel's nature sees them not: it is keenly analytical, and his art is analytical also. All his powers are, in fact, concentrated on analysis.

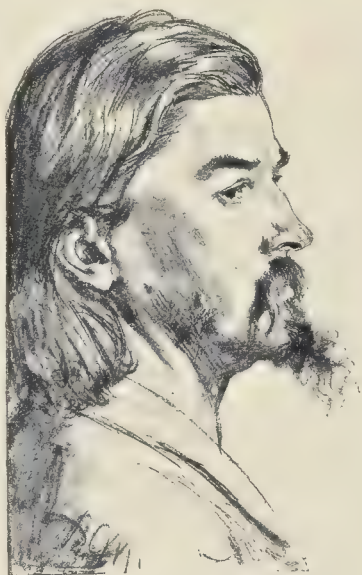
His gifts as a painter are very great, particularly in the treatment of colour; he composes his picture well, and no one displays more skill in representing a scene so as to give value to its most important factors and salience to its characteristic details. He looks at it from a point of view where no one else ever thought of standing, and this gives his work a stamp of freshness that startles us with a shock of surprise in everything he does. Still, all these characteristics sink into the background by the side of that which stands supreme above every other, and places Menzel on an eminence by himself—the fine style of his drawing



STUDY OF A HEAD

The history of Art has taught us to reverence the names of a chosen few, those great artists who have centred all their powers of expression on the study of form. Some have striven to be familiar with it, merely to ignore it afterwards—yearning only to spiritualise their work and break free from all earthly fetters in depicting the heroes of their choice. Familiar as their studies prove them to have been with the realities of the human form, they nevertheless chose to paint symbols, and disdained what they regarded as mere freaks of Nature, following the great typical lines—the nobler masses, so to speak—and representing the larger divisions into which the physical and moral facts of individual humanity are grouped. Here are the lines of grace; here, the lines of strength; this will express joy in a face; this, on the other hand, represents rage or fear; there are certain lines characteristic of childhood, others that belong to old age—and these are far more numerous, for Time himself is a skilled draughtsman and loves to lay bare the wheels and cogs of the human machine. This school of painters made it their aim to generalise the dynamics of our organisation, and were ready to neglect the structure of the instrument and apprehend only its function. And it could pride itself on having produced, next to the great artists of ancient Greece, such immortal masters as Leonardo and Raphael.

But other artists, less subjective by nature, have felt that men and things were worthy to be painted for their own sakes, and that life in the individual has a



STUDY OF A HEAD



personal interest by no means beneath the dignity of art. Where others generalised they did their utmost to particularise; they would study every line of a face with single-minded fidelity, as they would dissect the petals of a flower. Not less in love than the former class with all that is poetical, they nevertheless have not needed to lift their feet from the solid earth to find their ideal. Nature displays stirring or pathetic facts at every turn, and they have stood face to face with her and have wrung from her the secret of transferring those facts to canvas so that others might see them; but they have stamped the image with the seal of their individuality, the reflected glow of their own intellect and feeling. This school, too, is proud of the masters she has given to the world—in the Low Countries, during the fifteenth century, and again in the seventeenth; in Italy before 1500; and in Germany, both then and after, in Albrecht Dürer and Holbein.

It is to this school that Adolf Menzel belongs; and we need not fear to write so great a name as Holbein by the side of his. The great painter of Basle is his master; from him he has learnt that passionate love of truth which shines through his work, and the marvellous vigour with which he sets to work to reveal it, without any foregone conclusion or conventional preconception, losing his own identity in contemplating that of his model.

The materials for a complete Encyclopedia of the Art of Drawing might be found in Menzel's portfolios, either in rapid sketches or in finished studies; everything is to be seen in them which has a form to be represented, noted by a hand whose sureness and graphic power bid defiance to every other mode of expression, written or spoken—a mine

of wealth, worthy to be the glory of any collection to which they may ultimately belong. As we have said, Menzel's pencil has no equal in our day, unless we except that of Meissonier. Not a line, not a dot, but has its value; he draws as Proudhon wrote, giving us the same concentrated extract in the crispest and concise form. We find in his works such a wealth of pictorial ideas—that is, of form and colour—that we stand before them charmed and surprised at all we discover while we gaze.

It is not enough simply to transcribe the exact facts about a man or an object; if this were all, photography would leave nothing to be desired; selection is needed to register only that which is worthy to be recorded. Many artists, both old masters and modern, have been possessed by the same mania for collecting notes, and have then been bewildered by the riches at their command, and incapable of using what they had gained. Menzel is not one of these; he has the gift of co-ordinating the materials he accumulates, and of reproducing them at need under the aspect best suited to the subject he wishes to represent. He invariably works as an



STUDY OF AN ITALIAN GIRL.

*Artist*; to him knowledge is merely a means of proving, by the irresistible arguments of plastic science, those natural truths which he has learnt from observation. Observe with constant care, and express with entire simplicity the facts you have observed; these are the first principles of his method, and it is by never deviating from them that he has risen to the eminence on which he stands in the naturalistic school. No painter in Europe can dispute the position; he is the confessed master of *genre* painting, a department to which his genius has added breadth and dignity. Has he not, indeed, adapted it to history, earning the title of "Painter of Frederick the Great," by the wonderful series of *genre* paintings and drawings, full of delicate observation and realism, which the story of the hero's life has suggested to him?



STUDY OF A TREE. VERONA.

Adolf Friedrich Erdmann Menzel was born at Breslau, December the 8th, 1815. His artistic instincts declared themselves as soon as he had ideas to express; it might be said that he was born with a pencil in his hand. Like most young artists, he had to contend with strong objections on the part of his father, who kept a school for girls, and considered his son's future already traced out and provided for. However, being a man of sound judgment, he did not hold out unreasonably, and at fifteen his son was at liberty to follow the career he had chosen. His friends had pointed out the great merit of the sketches, more particularly portraits, which the boy had drawn on the margins of his books, especially works on history, for which he had a marked predilection from his earliest years. His father now removed to Berlin, where he set up a lithographic, engraving, and printing-press, a scheme which quite met his son's views. Lithography, which was a new process, was attracting much attention at that time; it gave the young artist an opportunity of making a start with new means at his command, and we shall see that he made good use of his opportunities. The absolute necessity of managing his father's business to the best advantage, and of working with his own hands at the preparation of lithographic plates, was of the greatest value to Menzel;

it saved him from the routine of the regular mechanical teaching of schools of art. Menzel never had a master—no master, that is to say, but Nature. No one ever taught him to draw, he followed the guidance of his own instinct. It was not that he made any precocious parade of contempt for his precursors; he was constantly wandering through museums, or staring at the display of engravings in the print-shops; taking a particular interest in French art of the eighteenth century. For the works of antiquity he felt a sort of superstitious reverence, trying to discover the secret of their serene beauty,—training and educating his eye, in short, by every means in his power, but never copying the work of others.

When he wanted to draw he would be guided by no master; he could brook no teaching. The class at the



Academy for drawing from the cast—which he joined in 1833—did not keep him long. He had lost his father, too, the year before, and the whole charge of the family rested on his young shoulders—he was but seventeen—so how could he find time for studies which he felt to be unprofitable? He must work for his living and to maintain others, and he bent to the burden with generous devotion, throwing into his labour that extraordinary energy which, as events showed, nothing could discourage or quell.

Before going into a critical dissertation on Menzel's works, it will be well, perhaps, to give a brief sketch of Art in Germany at the time when the lad, who has risen to be her greatest artist, was publishing his first attempts. We have spoken of those whom we may call his forefathers in art; his nearer kindred—those with whose minds his had most affinity—were Rauch and Schadow, the sculptors, and Daniel Chodowiecki, the designer and engraver, who had died in 1801. Herr Ludwig Pietsch, the German writer of a notice of Menzel,\*



STUDIES FROM MODELS.

gives the same artistic pedigree of his genius, placing the great name of Holbein at the base of the tree as we have done. We, like the lamented Duranty, who wrote an admirable article on Menzel in the "*Gazette des Beaux Arts*," will here add that of the great English painter, Hogarth; and regarding all these artists, each a master in his degree and kind, as a family group, we may say, with him, "They are the school of truth, of psychology, and of observation."

In 1833, when Menzel brought out his first work—a collection of lithographs from pen-and-ink drawings, representing the vicissitudes of an artist's life ("*Künstler's Erdenwallen*")—German art was in the throes of a phase of religious and romantic development. This travail had been initiated in 1801, the year of Chodowiecki's death. The revivalists had set to work to create a national art for Germany by representing, to the exclusion of all other subjects, her place and part in the world's history from the very beginning of the Indo-Germanic race to the present day. History, poetry, archeology, mythology, and philology, were all ransacked in turn for subjects for painting. The Middle Ages, somewhat travestied, were regarded, as Duranty says, "as the great property-room whence the revivalists could supply themselves with scenery and costume." The names of the more remarkable among them must always command respect. Cornelius, Overbeck, Veil, Kaulbach,

\* Prefixed to his "*Menzel Album*" of 10 Photographs. Schauer. Berlin, 1868.



Bendemann, Schnorr, and many others, were men of indisputable merit and talent; but the results have shown that these artists, in striving to attain an ideal of National Art by such visionary means, had started on the wrong road. Menzel, in following up the traditions of Chodowiecki and of those painters and sculptors who were his god-parents in art, showed greater wisdom; he saw at a very early stage, that in order to create a truly National School of Art—works differing essentially from those of other countries—the indispensable first step must be to paint his fellow-countrymen as they actually were; that if he wanted to give them individuality, analysis might be very fitly appealed to; but not wild flights into the regions of philosophy, since those are the domains of the human intellect at large, and have no nationality.

The next thing was to find some new and original means of expression. High Art in Germany had not been able to keep free from the influence of foreign methods, but Menzel would have nothing to do with the School of David, and some other French painters of the romantic type, whose teaching had crossed the Rhine; he turned, open-souled, to Nature. Thus, by avoiding those cloud-wrapped heights on which the painters of the day had enthroned themselves, he laid the foundation of a school which was really German and national: for, though it has some roots in the Dutch school of the seventeenth century and the French school of the eighteenth, Menzel's Art and school are purely German both in expression and feeling.

It is not strictly true to say that *The Vicissitudes of an Artist's Life* was Menzel's first work, for he had already, in 1833, executed a considerable number of drawings for commercial purposes: headings for prospectuses, programmes and bills, New Year's cards—in short, all the productions which constitute the trade of a lithographic printer. Senefelder's invention had not been hailed with any enthusiasm in Germany; it was abandoned to inferior purposes, waiting till a man of genius should take it up and vindicate its merits in the eyes of the fastidious public. It found a champion in Menzel.



DOOR-KNOCKER, WEIGHT, AND STAPLE  
(Fac-simile from the Artist's Sketch-book).

His first volume of lithographs illustrated Göthe's little poem with the same title, "Künstler's Erdenwallen;" it attracted some notice among Berlin artists, and Schadow, the principal of the Academy of Arts, spoke of it in very flattering terms. Sachse and Co., the publishers, encouraged by its success, were disposed to repeat the experiment; nevertheless, three years went by before Menzel put another work into their hands, *Great Events in the History of Brandenburg* ("Denkwürdigkeiten aus der brandenburgischen Geschichte"). Sachse. Berlin, 1836.

This work marks an important stage in the history of Menzel's career. It was the starting-point of a long series, such as the Germans call a cycle; a collection, that is to say, of works illustrating a definite period or particular sequence of events: historical monographs, but delineated not written. To execute such a work worthily demands not only high artistic powers but those of a philosopher and an antiquary. Menzel has been exceptionally successful in it, because by nature he is a keen observer; and by indefatigable study he has

mastered a remarkably accurate and comprehensive knowledge of history and archæology, and the power of recording them on paper with such complete truth that he can, at will, raise the men and things of past times to life before our eyes. This brings us back once more to his extraordinary skill as a draughtsman; and to this we shall return again and again, even when examining his slightest work. Herr Pietsch says, "Menzel was so happy as to represent Nature with absolute accuracy before the invention of photography," and this is true; but it is not the whole truth: he did more, for his drawings are more emphatic, more cogent (*probant*, as Stendhal would have said) than any photograph can be. The most fluent speakers are not the most convincing, but those whose coercive eloquence gives prominence to unanswerable arguments, and strips truth of all the wrappings that shroud it. Now photography is essentially wordy, though much of what it tells us is valuable; but it is the part of an artist to verify this alone and neglect everything else.

Chronological sequence here compels us to turn for a moment from Menzel as an engraver, to his works as



STUDY OF COSTUMES OF THE REIGN OF FREDERICK THE GREAT  
ENGRAVED BY ADOLF MENZEL

a painter. His first painting in oil dates so far back as 1836, when he was but twenty. The subject is taken from a novel written at that time, and the picture, called *Audiat et altera pars*, represents a court of justice in the sixteenth century. Some men are being accused of murder; the murdered woman has just been brought in on a litter; to the right stand her weeping parents and her husband, appealing for vengeance; to the left are the assassins, held in fetters by a gaoler; the background is filled with the assessors and judges, seated on a raised platform. We cannot assert that it is a masterpiece, but the artist's conscientiousness and originality are very evident even in this beginner's work. The heads and hands are carefully studied for truthful expression, and the action is dramatic and bold. The young artist has not been frightened by difficulties, that is clear. The picture is now in the Royal collection at Berlin. Another picture, known as *The Consultation of Lawyers* ("Advokaten-konsultation"), was painted at the same period.

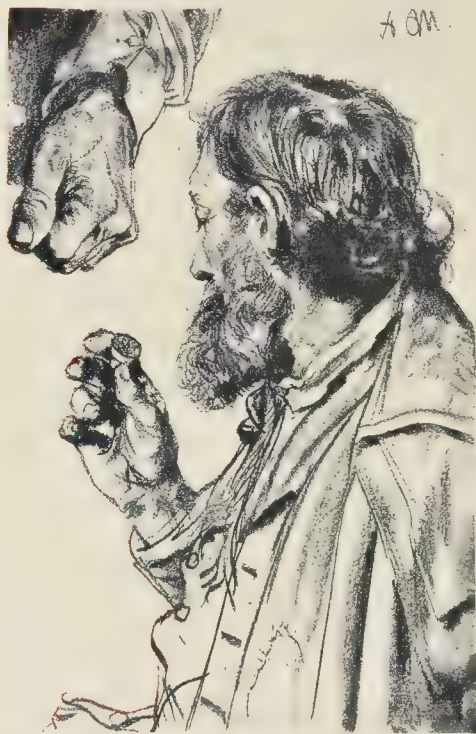
A certain resemblance in colouring and feeling has been pointed out between these early works by Menzel

and the paintings of Mr. J. Pettie, R.A. They exhibit a marked preference for yellow and red, which became even more conspicuous later.

In 1839, Menzel once more took up his work in black and white; though, in the interval, he had still been working at lithographs for the trade—as the *Five Senses* ("Die fünf Sinne"), *The Lord's Prayer* ("Das Vaterunser"), and numerous diploma papers for different guilds. These necessary labours cannot be regarded

as forming part of his career as an artist, remarkable as they are when compared with other work of the same class at that time, both in Germany and elsewhere.

The success of a *Life of Napoleon* ("Vie de Napoléon") written by Laurent, and illustrated by Horace Vernet, suggested to a German author, Franz Kugler,\* the idea of bringing out a similar work in honour of the great Prussian hero, Frederick the Great, and he intrusted the illustrations to Menzel. After consulting the publishers, he selected the method of reproduction which promised to secure the widest circulation for a book intended to be popular. Their object was to print in large numbers and sell at a low price. Thus it came to pass that the process of wood engraving was revived in Germany by the same man who had first proved the merits of lithography. The first drawings, however, done by Menzel for this popular *Life of Frederick the Great*† ("Leben Friedrichs des Grossen." Weber and Lorek, Leipzig) were put into the hands of French engravers; though so early as 1838 Menzel had employed his fellow-countryman, Unzelmann, to engrave on wood his drawing of the Death of Franz von Sickingen, the result had failed to satisfy so fastidious



STILL LIFE WITH SHEET  
Drawing for the Art of the Book

a judge. But the French engravers answered his expectations no better, and he undertook to form a school of wood-cutting by having the blocks executed on the spot and under his own eye.

The illustrations to this book—four hundred cuts in all—are somewhat dry in style, and betray the want of decision which stamps the handling of men who have not known how to choose their examples—either from the work of contemporary engravers or from the French eighteenth century work. "But," says Duranty, "the days slip by; three years have gone by, and page by page, as the end draws near, composition, drawing, and execution all gain vigour and individuality; the light and tone are better, the character is more keenly indicated, the attitudes are more natural, the action freer; the treatment, the conception, and the arrangement are fresher and broader. By the time we reach the last chapter we cannot fail to perceive that a great artist has grown under

\* Author of Kugler's Handbook of Painting, translated by Lady Eastlake.

† Translated by Moriarty. London, 1877.



our eyes and is now fully ripe." But the great artist has gone on growing and ripening throughout his life. In fact, twelve figures of the Heroes of Frederick the Great's Army are very superior to the illustrations to Kugler's book. They were engraved for a work of which only thirty copies were printed, and which is very scarce ("Die Armee Friedrichs des Grossen," published by Alexander Dunckel. 12 illustrations by A. Menzel. Berlin, 1856). They are perfect marvels of intense vitality, combined with an amazing breadth and originality of conception; they are, too, admirably engraved, bearing witness to the progress made in the school founded and superintended by Menzel; no better work has ever been done anywhere.

We will pause a moment, to examine more minutely a figure for which Menzel borrowed the general outline, from the fine works of Rauch and Schadow, but into which he has so completely infused his own genius that he may claim it as his own creation. From among the numerous repetitions of it which he has been required to paint or to draw we will select that known as *Frederick in Old Age*, published in "Germania." It is a really matchless work. Frederick is standing with his head turned towards the spectator, in the attitude of a man who is looking round as he walks. The hero is grown old; his face, closely wrinkled with years, is furrowed by broader lines where the passions his genius has so amply satisfied still seem to be lurking; his eyes are wide open and have all the sparkle of youth, and look straight into the spectator's, with a glance as direct and as keen as an arrow. The mouth is a little drawn and shows the loss of teeth, but it looks, nevertheless, as if satire were always hovering on the lips. The figure, which is slightly bent, turns with a certain stiffness of action; one hand rests on a walking-stick, the other is placed on the hip. The whole effect is unforgettable; the king stands before you, body and soul. Van der Meulen painted Louis XIV., Gros painted Napoleon I., Menzel will be known as having painted Frederick, and as having brought unique genius to his task.

In "Germania" Menzel has also shown us the court of Frederick William, his hero's father and predecessor. His favourite amusement was an evening spent over tobacco and beer. Generals, ministers, diplomatists, and officers, invited from among the garrison at Potsdam, met at the *Tabaks Collegium*, where he joined them without ceremony of any kind, taking with him his son, who did not more than half relish the uproarious merriment that prevailed. Menzel's drawing gives us an amusing picture of the *Tabaks Collegium*.

Menzel's studies, with a view to assimilating and representing the characteristic aspects of Frederick himself and of his times, were extensive and miscellaneous. He was greatly assisted by the countenance shown him by the Prussian Government, who allowed him to use a hall in the Palace, full of old armour and harness, as a studio. There he was able to study the costume of his figures at his leisure, and by carefully tracing the marks left by the personal peculiarities of the wearers, could reconstruct in his fancy their figure, mien, habits, and tricks. Thus helped by the most telling evidence, his keen intelligence was free to ride forward on the high road to realism, and he soon had no difficulty in recording the pictures of the past, which he saw



A MINNAL. NOIRE DAME DES ERMITES  
(Fac-simile from the Artist's Sketch-book).

in his mind's eye. Menzel's works illustrating books belonging to the cycle of Frederick the Great were published as follows:—

1842. Franz Kugler's *Life of Frederick the Great*, mentioned above.

1843. *The Royal Edition of Frederick the Great's own Writings*, illustrated by Menzel throughout. Not more than 200 copies were printed; it was not finished till 1849.

1849. *The Soldiers of Frederick the Great* ("Die Soldaten Friedrichs des Grossen"). Text by Ed. Lange, Leipzig.

1850. *The Times of Frederick the Great* ("Aus König Friedrichs Zeit"). Duncker, Berlin, published, in 1856, twelve selected sheets from the former work.

1851. He began *Frederick the Great's Army* ("Die Armee Friedrichs des Grossen in ihrer Uniformirung"), which was not brought out till 1857, and only thirty copies were printed for princes and great public libraries. (There is a copy in the British Museum.)

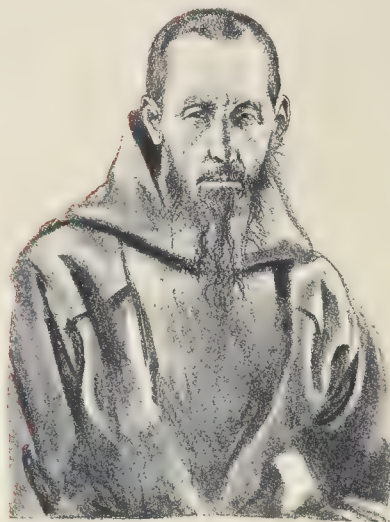
Some few prints published in "Germania."

In 1882 three hundred copies were printed off as a second edition of the two hundred original illustrations to the works of Frederick the Great. As the publishers boast, with perfect justice, "these illustrations are far superior to

anything else that has ever been done in wood engraving, whether we look at the finish of the drawing, the raciness and brilliancy of effect, or the subtlety of the expression," and they display at the same time the admirable technical qualities of the engravers, Otto and Albert Vogel, Unzelmann, and H. Müller.

In drawing on wood Menzel never used either the brush or the stump; he worked with the pencil only, and each touch is conscientiously reproduced in fac-simile by the engraver. One circumstance is worthy of record. When the work was undertaken by the orders of Frederick William IV., Menzel, whatever his subject might be, was required to limit its size to fit a block of twelve centimetres in width (rather under 4½ inches). This restriction entailed difficulties which any other artist would have been at a loss to surmount. To Menzel it only afforded opportunities for marvels of ingenuity in the arrangement of his compositions; but he felt it a point of honour to let the public know how he had been fettered, and a drawing on the title-page of the new edition represents a Cupid standing in the opening of a pair of compasses marked as 12 centimetres at most, and below it the words "*Ilic, hic salta.*"

Within these narrow limits, however, Menzel created a world—the philosophers, the wits, all the distinguished characters in France with whom the King of Prussia corresponded or whom he attracted to his court, the generals who conducted the Seven Years' War, the learned men and the artists of the time, and, in the midst of them all, the strange figure of the King himself, ironical, sceptical, and scoffing, every one of whose aspects Menzel had discerned and made note of



STUDY OF A MONK  
(Fac-simile from the Artist's Sketch-book)



STUDY OF HANDS.



STUDIES OF OLD DRESSES ON LIVING MODELS (1 is, costume of the Artist's Drawing)

W. M. H. 1890  
 1890-1891  
 1890-1891





long before the publication of his letters had revealed all the details of his inner man. We shall meet with this first and greatest member of the Hohenzollern dynasty in several of Menzel's paintings to be mentioned presently. For the present we will go on with our study of his work as a draughtsman; it is important enough and fine enough to lay the foundations of fame for several artists. The Berlin master knows full well where his strength lies and on what his true glory is based; though his pictures have long fetched prices as high as those of any living Continental painter, he is far from neglecting the means by which he produced his exquisite pages of history. The *Times* said of him not long since, "Menzel is the first illustrator in the world." This is absolutely true; and he carries on his work as an illustrator without pausing even to rest.

A few years since he brought out the *Broken Pitcher*, a comedy by H. Von Kleist, illustrated with thirty woodcuts. What can be said of this work? Only what has been said of all the rest. There is not another



THE SIESTA

artist in the world who could so perfectly enter into a work of literary art and translate it, as he has done, into the language of drawing. Kleist's poem has nothing lofty or heroic about it. It is a tragi-comedy of humble life, and the scene of the amusing incidents is laid in Holland. A jug has been broken; love has played a conspicuous part in bringing about this disaster, as was inevitable in an author who lived at the end of the seventeenth century, when practical joking was thought genteel, and who had adopted the French vein. The affair is brought to public trial, and the plaintiff lays his case before the pompous Justice of the Peace of the district, and as it happens that a great lawyer is on the spot, in the course of his circuit of inspection, justice is to be done in strict course. The case is opened and argued, and the issue proves that the Judge himself is the guilty party. Without seeing the book\* it is impossible to imagine the enormous amount of study of human nature, of wit and of humour, that Menzel has put into these illustrations. As to their beauty

\* "Der Zerbrochene Krug." Hoffmann and Co., Berlin. A splendid volume worthy of the great artist who has illustrated it. The author of this notice is now preparing a French edition, to appear in October, 1883.

and merit as pictures they astonish artists even, and that is saying a good deal. Those who are familiar with Menzel's powerful genius and methods of treatment, though they admire no less, may not wonder so much, for they know that every figure, nay, every accessory introduced, unimportant as it may seem, has been studied and appropriated from Nature. Some of the original studies, indeed, are known to us either by our having seen them in the artist's portfolios or through fac-similes published in some of the best Art publications of the day.

But the exceptional beauty of the illustrations to "*Der Zerbrochene Krug*" has led us to overlook some works which ought to have been placed earlier in order of time. We have alluded to certain detached prints—lithographs, woodcuts, or *héliogravure*—executed by the artist as if for his own amusement, for headings of programmes, diplomas, addresses to be presented, and other occasions; all these trifles are interesting,

but a few of them are worthy of more careful study. From the hand of such an artist even trifles are not contemptible. Duranty, an excellent judge of such matters, speaks of several of these devices as "works full of real genius." Here, for instance, is a trade card printed to commemorate the "jubilee" of a house of business (Messrs. Heckmann): it represents the triumph of Industry. Here is another, a ticket for a banquet in honour of the hundredth anniversary of Schadow the sculptor's birthday, 1864. Another, a pretty little vignette, the frontispiece to a collection of Spanish songs dedicated to Madame Pauline Viardot. Another, a frontispiece to the address presented by the Burgomaster of Berlin on the reception given to the King after the war in 1866. In all these rapid little drawings the treatment is as broad and decorative as if it had come from the hand of Rubens, and they all bear the same stamp of uncompromising truthfulness which is Menzel's sign-manual; every detail has a vitality and *go* which it is impossible to overlook.

Among the lithographs there is one which must on no account be passed over; it is a work quite unique in its way, a marvel even to artists, and of which Cou-



ture spoke with admiration and respect. *Jesus disputing with the Doctors in the Temple* was published in 1851; it is of large folio size. A more signal example of what can be done by an artist who combines power and imagination with intense truth of realisation it would be impossible to find. Among the doctors of the synagogue who sit grouped round the marvellous Child we see a series of Jewish types, and varieties of such striking individuality that we feel as if we must have elbowed them in the street; and yet the picture does not fall below the dignity proper to its historical importance, and the archeological accuracy of costume and accessories dates the incident beyond all mistake. The men alone seem to have been born our contemporaries, for men do not change; they are the same to-day that they were yesterday, and this is especially true in its application to the Jewish race, which has survived almost unmixed with any other. The Christ is conceived of in the same spirit of uncompromising sincerity, there is nothing conventional in the type. He is a Jewish child, with an aquiline nose, sparkling black eyes, and thickly waving hair; he is talking, we



can see, with oriental vehemence, and his audience look astonished at his words. The attitudes of all these men, studied from life, are of course devoid of that histrionic dignity which is part of the universal recipe for the manufacture of such a picture; at the same time the breadth and variety of action have afforded an opportunity for composing some superb masses of drapery. So bold an innovation in the handling of a sacred subject occasioned some excitement at the time; a little more and there would have been a hue and cry of "Sacrilege;" and yet, though naturalistic treatment had perhaps never before been carried to such a pitch in a work of art, the mere fact of giving a homely rendering of a subject by common consent regarded as sacred was not in itself a novelty. To mention only one of the most illustrious names, has not Rembrandt availed himself in sacred subjects of an analogous class of symbolic treatment, and no one has thought of crying out against it? The "hundred guilder print," that magnificent etching in which the great master has represented Christ healing the sick—a marvel of composition and a blaze of luminosity—is surely drawn from the same fount, the deepest well-spring of humanity. In the Rembrandt, to be sure, an element of the loftiest idealism is supplied by the contrast of the suffering that has gathered round Christ the healer. This element is wanting in Menzel's picture, but his realism, though it may appeal less to the believer, has a noble eloquence of its own, giving a greater intensity of expression to the physical aspect of the subject and more practical truthfulness to nature.

In the same year, 1851, Menzel published his *Attempts on Stone with the Brush and Graver* ("Versuche auf Stein mit Pinsel und Schaabeisen"), a work in which the delicacy and power of tone remind us of Rembrandt's etchings. And lastly—to finish the subject of his illustrations—he drew portraits of Mo-



FIG. 1. (ROM. 11.)  
1 to-simile from the Artist's Sketch book)

lière and of Shakespeare, engraved on wood, besides composing a number of illustrations for Grote's edition of Shakespeare printed at Berlin. When he had to represent Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn it need not be said that he referred directly to the guidance of Holbein. These lords and great ladies—ponderous and a little stiff in their ruffs and padding—give us a perfect idea of their time. Menzel's historical pictures are to the traditional representations of such scenes just what contemporary memoirs are to the narratives of professional historians—and we need not ask where the truth lies.

Brush in hand, our artist loses none of the superiority which stamps his drawings; he may vary his mode of work, but the man is unchanged; we only find a new phase of his genius to admire. His paintings, always broadly illuminated, sparkle with pure and brilliant colour; whatever the form of his work, the expression is always as intense as possible. He emphasizes both colour and drawing, never sacrificing either to the other.

This, no doubt, is the reason why the adherents of the "Symphony" school—works that appeal exclusively to the outer senses—feel a disturbing element in his pictures; they find in them too much to see at once, and the general scheme of harmony is lost upon them. We venture to reproduce here a passage we wrote formerly for the "Gazette des Beaux Arts," when criticising a picture exhibited by Menzel in Paris in 1882, *The Procession*.

"This is, as we have said, the work of a master. Like all Menzel's pictures, it dazzles a careless eye by the very excess of power and truth that characterise it; we seek in vain for any sort of concession to popular taste.



THE OLD COVERED BRIDGE AT ICKLENE  
(Fac-simile of the Artist's Drawing).

all; always and everywhere we find the same distinct determination to put everything into the picture that can give living expression to the subject or make it characteristic and dramatically picturesque. Menzel is never false to his convictions. Faithful and sincere study of nature is the fundamental dogma of the Berlin painter's artistic creed, and he has never fallen short of it in deed. Here our enthusiasm must grow sober; we must restrict ourselves to making as complete a list as possible of his paintings, and then our task is done.

Frederick the Great, as has been said already, has supplied him with a great variety of subjects. In 1849 *Frederick the Great out riding* ("Ein Spazierritt Friedrichs des Grossen").

1850. *Frederick at Sans Souci* ("Friedrich der Grosse bei tafeel im Kreise seiner Freunde.") This picture was exhibited in Paris in 1851 as *La Table ronde à Sans Souci*. It represents Voltaire and other guests of the great King; but it was not a success.

The picture is extremely well composed, but without any conventional artifice; to take it in and feel its purpose we must look at it as we look at nature when we want to get something beyond a mere impression of a scene; we must study it attentively. Then the astonishing talent of it is revealed. A superficial glance shows us no more than that the colouring is broad and gorgeous; next we discover that it is unerringly truthful. As we proceed in our analytical study of the picture we cannot fail to be struck by the intense vitality that animates every part of it. It is nature itself, caught in the very act, and transferred to the canvas by a hand as free as it is minute, which gives to every object its true form, physiognomy, and relative value. The types of humanity are endless in variety, each has its own individuality and each bears the stamp of the part he fills. It is difficult to say which we admire most, the skill of the painter or the keenness of the observer. We see in this picture a concentration of powers which are too rarely combined in one and the same artist; the thought, the wit of it, are as delightful as the execution is masterly. But look again, for this is no mere page of a novel to be skimmed by a heedless reader." We have ventured to reprint this rather long quotation from our own account of one of Menzel's latest pictures, because it epitomizes our feelings with regard to his painted works as a whole. What we said of one applies to



1852. *A Concert at Sans Souci* ("Flöten Concert in Sans Souci." Phot. in Pietsch, Menzel-Album), National Gallery, Berlin.

1854. *Frederick the Great travelling* ("Friedrich der Grosse auf Reisen." Pietsch, Menzel-Album).

1855. *The States of Silesia doing Homage to Frederick the Great, 1741* ("Friedrich bei der Huldigung in Breslau").

1856. *Frederick at the Battle of Hochkirch* ("Friedrich in der Schlacht bei Hochkirch," now in the Royal collection at Berlin), exhibited in Paris in 1857.

1857. *The Meeting of Frederick the Great and Joseph II.* ("Begegnung Friedrichs mit Joseph II."), in the possession of the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar. Besides these he has executed several water-colour drawings of scenes from the life of Frederick the Great.

All these are, strictly speaking, *tableaux de genre*, raised to the dignity of historical works by the wonderful genius of the painter. Thus they may be included in the same category as some historical pictures in the larger sense of the word.

A large cartoon executed in 1847 for the Society of Arts of Hesse-Cassel, *The Entrance of the Duchess Sophia into Marienburg in 1247*, and — in 1847 again—*The Meeting of Gustavus Adolphus and his Wife* ("Gustav Adolph und seine Gemahlin," Menzel-Album), in which the artist's determination to represent facts as they are, whatever the accessories may be, and to paint men as living and acting, is already very distinctly asserted.

The great picture of the *Coronation of King William at Königsberg* ("Krönung Wilhelm I. in Königsberg," in the Royal collection at Berlin), exhibited in the Paris Salon in 1868, is in this respect highly remarkable. Every figure has its living individuality; their physical peculiarities—their absurdities even—are not disguised, but the picture loses nothing of its grandeur and dignity.

After glancing for a moment at *Borussia*, an allegorical figure disguising, no doubt, a portrait of some royal personage, we turn to some fine studies—some lithographed, some drawn with a brush—which show Menzel's feeling for decorative treatment, and then go on to those familiar scenes in which he has recorded the events of official life, social festivities with their mixed crowd: ladies in all the splendour of fashion, and gentlemen of rank in many coloured uniforms sparkling with orders. Here the artist's technical skill is displayed in unexampled acuteness of observation and truthfulness of touch. Behind the conventional smile which irradiates every face he suggests each man's secret soul and inner mood; he knows them all from head to foot, and tells what he knows without respect of persons. He has, indeed, been severely criticised for this attention to details which are not



A WATERSIDE IN BAVARIA.  
The scene of the ARSENAL drawing.



merely unnecessary but hazardous; would it not be more magnanimous to mask the irony of nature behind the conventional dignity which has become a tradition with all painters of official love-feasts? We, however, for our part, cannot echo this censure, we are only too glad to find a painter superior to the temptation to rouge and bedizen truth. We have nothing but praise for such works as Menzel's *Bill supper* ("Ball-souper"), as the water-colour drawing *The State Ball* (exhibited at the Great Paris Exhibition in 1878), and as the *Presentation at Court*.

We are thus brought to the consideration of his *genre* pictures properly so called: scenes of domestic life, whether of the present or the past; of labour, such as factories, forges, and buildings in progress; of life at watering places chiefly at Gastein—children bathing, restaurants and beer gardens, out-of-door scenes full of air and greenery; of town life, crowd and bustle; views of Paris—the Jardin des Plantes, the Tuileries (Menzel-Album), the corner of a boulevard, of Berlin—the Linden Strasse at Berlin on the occasion of the King starting to join the army in 1870, and the return of the victorious troops. Then again interiors of cathedrals (more particularly that of Innsbruck), with some act of divine service, and all the actors—priests,

deacons, worshippers minutely studied; open-air preachings; incidents of travel by railway and on horseback; studies of heads, some in helmets or ancient head-dresses; episodes of chivalry; giants cased in armour and sporting with girls who hold flowers to them to smell, or raise their vizors and offer them cups of some national beverage, &c. &c. It would be impossible to name them all. Menzel's work forms a complete encyclopedia, and every style has its representative excepting the style that is a bore.

However, we should leave our task incomplete if we did not mention by name some of the pictures which are justly recognised as his best work. *The Foundry* ("Das Eisenwalzwerk: Moderne Cyclophen" Nat. Coll. at Berlin) was the wonder of the Great Paris Exhibition in 1878. It is the apotheosis of Man triumphant over Matter, wrapped in a whirl of flames, the ruddy glow mingling with and defying the daylight. Menzel delights in these contrasts of light, he loves them because he can manage them as none but a great artist can, and his church interiors and the delightful picture of *The Chimney-sweep* amply support the statement. Then we have *Taking a Walk* ("Der Spaziergang") and *A Servile Monk at Innsbruck*, also a man walking—two amazingly forcible figures, thoroughly thought out, moving with a spontaneous action that seems almost automatic. These men live and think while they walk, each absorbed in the thoughts that are part of his life—two strange but never-to-be-forgotten personalities.

We do not pretend to have exhausted our subject, but we hope we have succeeded in converting the reader to our belief that Menzel is one of the greatest of living artists.

Of the man himself little is known; after fifty years of incessant work he is still in full vigour, nay, his genius is still in the ascendant. He goes on his even way, his eye always on the watch, his pencil



AN OLD WOMAN SLEEPING.



A GIRL TAKING ON A FALCON.

seizing and noting Nature. Bégas, the sculptor, has executed a bust of him. "It shows us," says Duranty, "a small man muffled in a comforter and huddled up in a great-coat, with a head essentially German in character; the forehead prominent, the eyes deeply set, a restless, wilful, ill-humoured but humorous mouth, a keen look of intelligence and originality."

Though his personal appearance is so essentially German, his talent has no stamp of nationality. It is as universal as truth, as nature itself. Certainly, if we were required to trace his works to their origin from their intrinsic character, we should hardly ever be led to assign them to Germany. His humour and his mode of treatment are really foreign to his nation, though he, more than any man, has done justice to his nation's glory. But there is nothing in his way of conceiving a subject in the least akin to German sentimentality, which is so ready to throw itself into metaphysical dreams. His kingdom is essentially of this world. When he makes excursions into the past it is always to show the real face of the man that is hidden under the hero's mask, and to strip legendary lore of its adventitious wrappings. Still, he does not divest history of its interest even when he drags it down from the heights on which the credulity of man has placed it; on the contrary, it looks all the grander, for it is brought closer and within one's view, and stands firmly on the solid ground of fact and truth. The language used by this marvellous artist, his style and imagery, are always perfectly adapted to the scenes or feelings he desires to express. His drawings are like a written record, noted with a firm and uncompromising hand, scorning all useless adornments, all ornamental flourish, all the redundancy and elaboration which characterise most German artists. This is the reason why he cannot have any fellow-worker on the soil which has given his genius birth: it must live alone; it can have no offspring and found no school. Indeed, he can hardly be said to have an imitator. Liebermann only, among German artists, can refer his work to Menzel's influence.

The rest have trodden other paths, borrowing Knaus's shoes, or marching along the roads opened up by the mystics of the early years of the century to mislead German Art.

The Germans, in fact, have no genuine predilection for naturalism. The objective aspect of things has but a qualified charm for them. All they require of external facts is that they should suffice to express the subjective sentiment which each man for himself is always eager to put forward. In short, to sum up in two words the characteristic quality of German painting, it is literary rather than graphic. They paint not for painting's sake, for the pleasure of representing some new or beautiful form, of recording some play of light, or of soothing the eye with harmonies of colour; they paint to express themselves through a subject, and to point the moral they find in it. But the pen of a ready writer could do as much as this without any omission of the details and accessories which give charm to their pictures.

Between this personal application of the uses of Art and the high æsthetic sense of Menzel there is a great gulf fixed. What he finds and expresses in a subject is outside and beside the subject—the fifty pictorial trifles, the smallest details in the characteristic aspects of men and things which individualise them, differentiate and



A LITTLE STUDY IN  
THE ART OF DRAWING

specialise each. He holds in his fingers germs of life, and wherever he touches a living being rises under his hand, or an inanimate object with a character of its own. His master-mind does the rest, reducing these seething forces to order, and compelling them to subserve the idea he wants to express and the facts he intends them to represent.

Germany, we repeat, may be proud of such a son. Turn where we will, we can find no artist who is his superior, and, to say the whole truth, we are inclined to think he has no equal. Some, to be sure, insist on



STUDY OF A SWORD-HILT (Fac-simile of the Artist's Drawing).

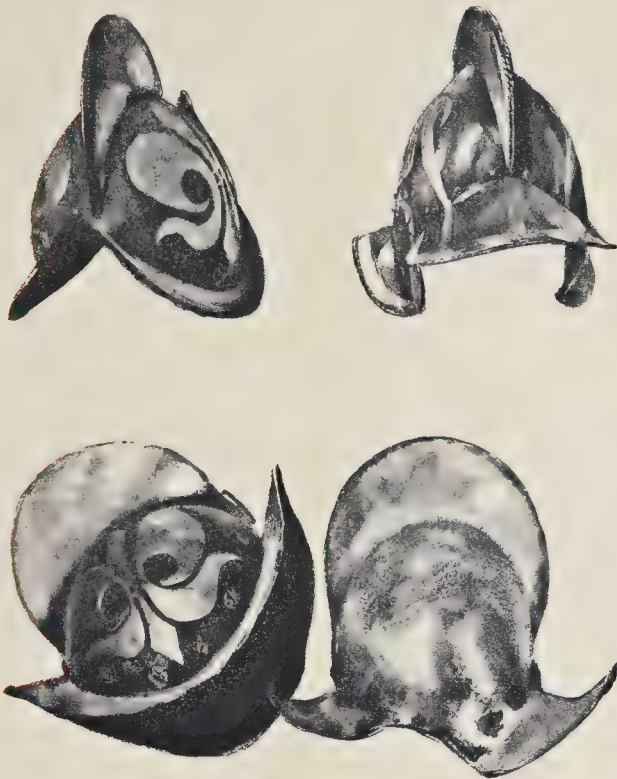
attacking subjects so stupendous as to dwarf the painter in our eyes, and it is only fair to allow for difference of aim and kind. To keep within the strictest limits of truth, it is safe to assert that Menzel is unique in his own line, and in saying this we are perfectly certain of meeting with no contradiction.

England and America, both countries quick to recognise foreign genius, have not, perhaps, given so much attention to Menzel as his unequalled talents might perhaps demand; but there cannot be any doubt that amongst the amateurs in those countries, who have been attracted by his vigour, no other artist is held in greater respect.



In the local instinct of art appertaining to each country there may be discerned in the two just named an already existing affinity for the originality of Menzel's genius—an originality which has much in common with their style of thought and appreciation.

Adolf Menzel is by no means so famous outside Germany as he deserves to be; his genius is appreciated only by a few collectors and amateurs. Time, however, cannot fail to give him his due, and in his native



STUDIES OF HELMETS.

land, meanwhile, he suffers from no lack of honours and recognition. He is a member of the Academies of Art of Berlin, Vienna, and Munich. He has been Professor of Painting at the Berlin Academy ever since 1876, and gained a gold medal at the Great Exhibition there; he has also had conferred on him the Prussian Order of Merit and the Order of Maximilian of Bavaria.

ALFRED DE LOSTALOT (CLARA BELL, Trans.).



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CARL VON PILOTY







THE CLASS OF PILOTY

## CARL VON PILOTY.



THE name that heads these lines has a wider significance than its merely personal one. It must be taken, so to speak, in a collective sense, for Piloty possesses pre-eminently the faculty of infusing his powers of creation into others—he is the embodiment of a school.

But not of a school where the members are all restricted to one groove, where only one general style is followed, and the pictures all bear that family likeness that stamps the descendants of a common ancestor. On the contrary, most of Piloty's pupils manifest such a wide range of ideas and diversity of representation, their talents are so unbiassed, that their independence has become the distinct characteristic of his school. Who, for instance, would imagine that Hans Makart and Franz Defregger had sat at the feet of the same master; or that Gabriel Max's pictures, with their melancholy beauty, and Grützner's scenes, so full of gaiety and animation, owed their origin to the same teaching? With his sharp insight and masterly hand Piloty gave his disciples the full benefit of his technical knowledge, at the same time allowing each one to retain, study, and foster his own peculiar gifts.

He was precise only upon such points as he knew required precision; he taught his followers that part of art that can be learnt; for the rest, he left to genius that which is most necessary to her furtherance—her freedom. To this method, that seems so natural, and is yet so rare, he owes his great reputation as a teacher, and the enthusiasm with which his pupils still regard him after so many years. Therein lay the secret of his success.

We will return later on to the working of the school; first, let us follow the actual career of the man who has won so great a name both as a teacher and as a painter.

From his earliest childhood Piloty lived in artistic circles. His father had the well-known lithographic establishment of Piloty and Lohle, still in existence at Munich, which took up Senefelder's newly invented improvements, and reproduced many important works. It was, therefore, only natural that the boy's precocious feeling for art should lead him to take the deepest interest in his father's profession. It never occurred to him to enter upon any other field of labour than the one that was constantly before him, and to which his every tendency was unconsciously helping to draw him, so that no scruples as to the fitness of his choice ever assailed his mind.

Carl von Piloty was born at Munich on the 1st of October, 1826, where in his eleventh year he entered the School of Art. Things were managed differently in those days to what they are now, when at twenty-five or thirty a man can suddenly turn painter, or at any rate is well over his education before, he takes the first steps in his artistic career. Then you were expected to begin in the ranks of your profession, and the sooner you entered the sooner you worked your way up. By the time Piloty was fifteen he had reached the highest class of the Art School. His talents had, of course, found recognition, but he was unsettled and discontented; he got no real satisfaction out of the work he had to do.

The strife between the bent of his talent and the training he had received had already begun, although the boy doubtless felt rather than understood the difference. He had been taught to follow certain formal principles, and yet his heart recognised but one model Nature. That "Realism" which afterwards brought him so much success, and not a little reproach, occasioned the first



STUDIES IN THE STREETS OF PARIS.

struggles of his youth, for "Idealism" was in those days the watchword of the artistic world, though nobody was very clear as to its meaning. Not that Piloty ever acted in direct opposition to his masters, or that he undervalued their real worth; he was too good-hearted and had too much respect for them and for art. But what message had their teaching for him?—a question that must always arise between a strongly-marked nature, with its deep feeling and strivings and desires, and the great men with whom it comes in contact. He longed to find himself understood, with all the hot impatience of youth; and that this should have failed him is no reproach to his masters; the fault was in the times and circumstances. Is it not even now an exception to find a teacher who really understands the individual characters of his pupils? But what Piloty carried out afterwards as a teacher he then craved, unconsciously perhaps, of his own masters—but in vain.

The great Cornelius, then at the head of the Academy, was too much occupied with his own vast



undertakings, and with the direction of the schools, to be able to follow the progress of each student; added to which the two were so widely different in their manner of thought, that had he come oftener in contact with Piloty he must have seen that he was in no way fitted to guide a nature so unlike his own. Still, he influenced his mind by the loftiness of his aims, and by the bright example of his noble character—factors not to be overlooked in any education. The meanest soldier feels that his general's glory is to some extent reflected on himself, and in the same way the youngest pupil prides himself when he belongs to a school at the head of which is a man of world-wide renown.

Piloty was then studying directly under Schnorr von Carolsfeld, to whom we owe the magnificent "Nibelungen" rooms in the Munich Palace, and who will always stand high in the history of German art. But his method and teaching were uncongenial to the young, impulsive, ambitious student, who was destined to mark the boundary between the old and new schools in Germany, and who was already the prototype of later modern art. Schnorr praised the studies that Piloty turned out in incredible numbers, but thought very little of his compositions, amongst which *The Good Samaritan* alone need be mentioned here.

From these unsatisfied longings and undefined aspirations he was suddenly plunged into the real struggles of life by the death of his father, which threw the whole management of the large establishment he had founded, and the maintenance of the family, on the shoulders of his scarcely sixteen-year-old son, who from a schoolboy suddenly found himself the head of an important and wide-spreading house of business. He had doubtless much to contend with before he got used to his altered position, but that energy and resolution that has always been part of his character helped him even then to triumph over all difficulties. He took up the work with the greatest activity, lent a hand himself

where it was necessary, was the first to come and the last to go, and thus, in spite of his youth, he was soon undisputed master. His object was to deserve this eminence in the eyes of his subordinates; he was born a leader of men, as he afterwards proved in his school. Whoever did not choose to obey him might go; a firm will was the basis of his character. But in the depths of his nature a struggle was going on of which the world knew nothing; the old strife between duty and inclination which must come to every soul that sighs for an unattainable ideal. Day after day found the ambitious young artist before the heavy stone plates, renouncing thereby all he held dear in art for the practical results of his industry. Only in the early morning and late at night did he belong to himself, and follow those higher aims which he never for a moment lost sight of. He would rise with the June sun, and taking his camp-stool and sketch-book went out and drew from Nature, and in the long December evenings he sat by his lamp, drawing still.

Those were hard times, but hard times brace us more than easy ones, and he had much to cheer and encourage him in the companionship of his true friend and counsellor, Carl Schorn, who had followed Cornelius to Munich from Dusseldorf, and whose clear critical sense and high artistic attainments were of the



STUDY IN THE STREETS OF PARIS

greatest value to Piloty. It was mainly owing to him that Piloty continued in the career he had marked out for himself, a circumstance for which he acknowledged himself Schorn's debtor for life. His unwearied zeal in his father's business began in the meantime to bear fruit, and matters became so flourishing that the young master was able, with a clear conscience, to hand over his duties to a substitute and devote himself to his own special work. He greeted this favourable turn in his fortunes with the deepest thankfulness, and took up his beloved art again with a relish that was all the stronger from having been denied him so long. The path of fame was open to him once more!

His first picture that gained any lasting success was *The Foster-mother*. Piloty had early shown a leaning towards the tragic side of life, and the subject of this picture had come home to his own experience. He shows us how a beautiful young peasant woman, who has hired herself out as nurse in a rich

family, comes back to her old home with her high-born nursling on her arm. She kneels beside the cradle in which lies her own poor sickly little child, on whom she may not lavish a mother's care, and on her face we see the anguish that must fill her heart.

But the strong unfettered spirit of the painter led him soon to abandon the everyday scenes of life, and rise to great historic events. He wanted to fix upon his canvas, not the features of a single face, but the distinguishing traits of some great epoch in the world's history; and the epoch that from his boyhood had most appealed to his imagination was that of that mighty tragedy, the Thirty Years' War. He had always felt himself irresistibly drawn towards the grand figure of the "Friedländer," Wallenstein, with all its unreasoning fatalism, its unruffled calm, its mysterious power of drawing men to itself; and he made it the central figure of the first great historical work by which he became famous. He had a deep admiration for Schiller's "Wallenstein," scene after scene of which was imprinted on his



STUDY IN THE STREETS OF PARIS

memory, but one especially took firmer hold on him than the rest—*Wallenstein's Death*. He felt impelled to paint it, and he selected the moment at which the man of might, whom all had hated or loved, lies lifeless on the ground, while by his side stands Seni, the astrologer, an embodiment of Fate—"Friedland's stars are set." This picture, now in the new Pinakothek at Munich, is well known by engravings, and has been sent to various exhibitions; but the excitement caused by its first appearance in Munich was something unheard of, on account not only of the admiration it called forth, but of the attacks that were directed against it. It was something original, in the fullest sense of the term. We must not forget this happened at the beginning of the fifties, at a time when the tenor of German art ways was an extremely even one, when conventionalism held undisputed sway, and anything out of the common was ten times more conspicuous than to-day. Some were horrified that so young and promising an artist should have chosen such a "morbid" subject, while others blamed the "realism" of its treatment and the undue importance given to the details of colouring; in short, the whole gamut of critical cant was run over. However, no one, whatever might be his opinion of the actual picture, could deny that here was a man who knew how to

paint, and Piloty could congratulate himself on the fact that by this one picture he had awakened to find himself famous. He shortly afterwards painted another scene from the same period, *The Founding of the League*. It had been ordered for the Maximilianeum, the building that forms the crowning point of the magnificent street built by Maximilian II., and on whose walls hang many works by the best modern painters. But it was a thankless subject, impossible to render picturesque, and naturally did not inspire the artist with that enthusiasm which he had brought to bear upon his *Wallenstein*.

Having thus established his name and secured his future, Piloty went in 1858 to Italy, accompanied by several art students and friends, amongst whom was the now celebrated Franz Leubach. Rome was their ultimate goal, but they took other towns, especially classical Florence, on their way, knowing that there is hardly an inch of Italian ground on which the artist cannot find something to learn. Piloty in particular was much benefited by his travels, for his was one of those eager cosmopolitan natures that will not allow that art is the monopoly of any one country, and finds something worth having wherever it goes. He was more conscious than most people of how much, intellectually, one nation owes the other, and that the Beautiful is the common property of all.

He filled his sketch-book with vivid studies of scenes and details, and the reader may judge of his treatment of subjects and the happy effects he produced by the sketches accompanying this article. However slight the subject, his quick feeling for the picturesque is everywhere visible, as well as the thorough technical knowledge that enabled him instantly to grasp the most salient points of the matter in hand, be it a landscape, a piece of an old ruin, or a passing street-boy.

Meanwhile he was collecting much valuable material for work on a grander scale. Here his colossal picture of *Nero* was first suggested

to him. The circumstance that drew his attention to the subject is not without interest. It happened in the studio of a sculptor in Florence, with whom he chanced to have a little discussion. When Piloty called on his friend he found him surrounded by little marble Cupids and the like. The painter asked him how he, who lived on such classic ground, could bring his mind to work on such insignificant things. "You should try your hand at some antique subject." "Well, what, for instance?" laughed the Florentine. There was a moment's pause, and then Piloty answered: "Nero on the ruins of Rome, surrounded by a group of dying Christians." The sculptor stared at him in astonishment. "Why, I should be thrown into prison for blasphemy! But if the subject pleases you so much, why not paint a picture of it yourself?" Here the conversation ended, but not so the impression it left on the painter's mind. The idea took firm hold on his fancy and would not let him rest; he soon saw the ruins of ancient Rome, and among them, in his mind's eye,



MINNESANGER



he always saw the figure of Nero; by the time he was at home again the subject was complete in its conception. He began painting it immediately on his return. Count Palffy, who gave him the commission, agreed with the painter in wishing it to consist of two side pieces and a large centre picture; on the two former were to be the groups of Christians, on the latter the Roman tyrant surrounded by his court. However, Piloty afterwards determined to unite it all in one picture, and carried out the design in his usual masterly manner, devoting several years to its completion.

While he was in the midst of it, Wilhelm von Kaulbach happened to visit him. The impression made upon him by the work was so great, and the excited discussion of its merits ran at last so high, that Kaulbach afterwards treated the same subject from his own point of view—a fact that did not tend to make the relations between the two painters less strained. Greek had here met Greek!

However, a much more important result of this work was Piloty's appointment as master in the Art School,

a position which he had long desired. He felt that this was his vocation in life, and the first step towards the realisation of a hope that was to bear much good fruit hereafter. It is not to be supposed that a man of such exceptional gifts as a teacher had waited for this opportunity of exercising them. Since 1856 he had taken a few pupils, who followed his lead with unqualified enthusiasm and confidence. But still he could of course bring about far greater results in a school that was supported by Government than as a private individual.

It was to the "Cultus" minister, Von Zwehl, that the great Art School owed the acquisition of so important a teacher, and Piloty was no doubt surprised at his promotion, for nowhere is a man less of a prophet in his own country than in Germany. His delight at the offer is scarcely to be described. One of his dearest wishes was thereby fulfilled, a brilliant career lay before him; and yet with that sudden self-distrust that so often assails us at any turning point of our life he hesitated before accepting it, doubtful for a moment whether he could carry out all that the world and his own conscience required of him. His entry into the Academy was unpretentious enough. He took possession of a few of the little studios at the back of the ground floor, and there gathered his former pupils round him. He did not work there himself till 1860, when he took the immense studio on the first floor that he still occupies. Amongst his pupils at that time were the two Hungarians, Alexander Wagner and Liezenmayer, the latter of whom was till lately Director of the



A ROMAN. I.

School of Art at Stuttgart, and who has become famous by his wonderful illustrations to Goethe's "Faust"; Ludwig, the landscape painter; the animal painter Hoffner; Schütz, celebrated for his charming pictures of Suabian life; and last, but not least, Franz Leubach. This promising circle was very nearly broken up by Piloty receiving a most flattering offer from the Grand Duke of Weimar to make him Director of the new Academy of Art in that city. Piloty repaired to Weimar to make a personal inspection, and experienced so much kindness from the Grand Duke that it cost him a struggle not to close with the offer then and there.

Eventually his love for his native city conquered. The requisition which he had put before the municipal authorities in Munich desiring better accommodation for his pupils was readily complied with, and he remained there, relieving himself thereby of much anxiety, and securing the future greatness of that school which has always played so important a part in the culture of Munich. Soon his increasing fame attracted men of mark from every part of Europe. Bohemia, Hungary, Greece, America, and every nationality in the great German Empire was represented in the talented brotherhood that gathered round the master with astonishing rapidity. A spirit of inspiration and concentrated power of work pervaded the Academy to an extent that had not been known there since its foundation. It was a golden age for Munich.

The students were divided into two groups, one filling a long row of studios on the ground floor, the other those on the third floor. Subsequently a third class was formed, which worked in the building set apart for painting on glass. But in one and all there was an unceasing flow of brightness and activity, that began with the dawn and scarcely ended with the approach of night. On the easels stood pictures in every stage of progress; from behind the screens came the half-audible titters of the models, and every wall was covered with those witty caricatures in which the overflowing spirits of young art students invariably find



IVAN THE TERRIBLE

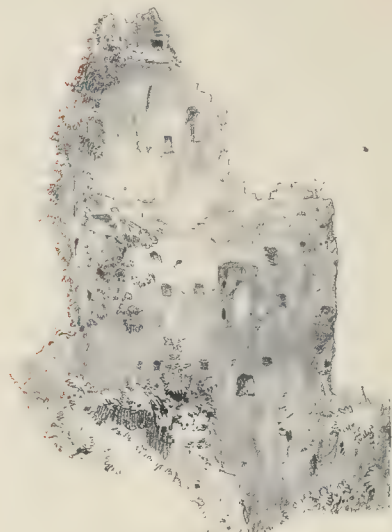
an outlet. But under all this fun and nonsense lay a solid foundation of real earnest work, and when the master arrived on his tour of inspection you saw at once what strict discipline was enforced in the merry school. This was the point wherein lay Piloty's strength and where he appeared to the greatest advantage—namely, his power of imparting his knowledge to others and the immense influence he gained over his pupils.

Nothing would be more tempting than to go fully into the subject of this influence, which had such striking effect upon some of his pupils, and of his marked individuality. But we must be careful not to lose sight of the great central figure in order to expatiate on its surroundings. Otherwise, how

interesting would be the details of Makart's student days; of how Defregger, then only a young peasant lad, first came to Piloty; of how Gabriel Max brought him the designs for his illustrations to Beethoven's "Symphonies," which, though crude and unfinished, yet already showed that visionary feeling that was to

become the distinguishing mark of his later works.

And then, too, what a triumph when Kaulbach sent his only son to study under Piloty—a fact that testified louder than any words could have done. Many are the famous names that might be mentioned in connection with this famous School of Art; but we must not forget that it is not with the pupils we have to do, but with the master, who formed the bond of union between them. And this union, this *esprit de corps*, was evident throughout the school. The students stood by one another to a man from the day they entered, however diverse their nationality. They knew that they had few friends and many enemies, and that in union lay their strength. They felt like a regiment that gathers round its leader, determined to fight its way bravely through all difficulties. Indeed, the strict discipline, prompt obedience, and unquestioning devotion to their head which the pupils manifested gave the school quite a military tone. The master's morning round among the studios was like that of a general reviewing his troops; on every side he met with cheerful greetings, and every eye watched with impatience for some sign of approval, or with distress when he uttered some word of blame.



THE RUINS OF JERUSALEM.

But whether he spoke in praise or blame, each one knew that he received exactly what he merited. Not one, not even the most talented, was spared those hard lessons that must be learnt in every school; but in all things beyond that he allowed their capacities and genius free play. He did not seek to mould his pupils to



THE APPIAN WAY.

one shape, and every one felt that the most was being done for his individual gifts, and that his master had as much interest in his future as he had himself. And truly Piloty took thought for each one, conscious of the great responsibility laid upon him in the cultivation of so much growing talent. He looked upon it as a



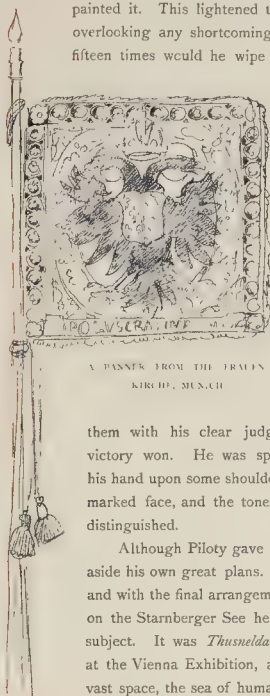
sacred trust, which gave those with whom he had to do a sense of the utmost security and confidence. All their interests were in common; there was no rivalry. They all learnt with and from one another, and the completion of a picture was as much an occasion of rejoicing to the whole band as to the one student who had painted it. This lightened the work and encouraged the worker. But Piloty made a point of never overlooking any shortcoming, insisting that every one should and could do his very best. Ten, fifteen times would he wipe a faulty figure from some canvas, regardless of the trouble it might

have cost; he recognised no giving up of work once begun. What could not be finished in one year must be completed in a second or a third, but completed it must be. This ultimatum, from which they knew there was no escape, doubtless kept the less persevering more steadily to their easels, especially as they also knew that the master was just as severe upon himself as he was with them, and therefore had every right to enforce his stern decrees. But, on the other hand, let any one of them come to him in those dark days of doubt and wavering, through which every soul—and more especially an artist's—must pass at some time, and he would feel the ready grasp of the true hand, ever swift to help in the hour of need and save a despairing heart from ruin. Then it was that the nobility of his character shone forth. More than one of his most gifted disciples owes him not only his artistic but his moral education. He upheld them and thought for them, strengthening

them with his clear judgment and unwearying friendship till the crisis was over and the victory won. He was sparing with his praise, but when, as now and then happened, he laid his hand upon some shoulder and said, "Well done!" the eyes would beam in the brown, strongly marked face, and the tones of his voice rang long after in the ears of the fortunate man he had distinguished.

Although Piloty gave the best part of his time and attention to his pupils, he in no wise laid aside his own great plans. He had begun a picture, the suggestion for which dates back to 1862, and with the final arrangement of which he had long been occupied. While spending the summer on the Starnberger See he had studied all the classic writers who could throw any light upon the subject. It was *Thusnelda led in Triumph by Germanicus*, a colossal picture which appeared first at the Vienna Exhibition, and now belongs to the "Neue Pinakothek" in Munich. Imagine the vast space, the sea of human faces, the pomp and splendour, that an artist must call up before us when he would have us behold Rome—the Rome of the Cæsars—the Empress of the ancient world!

This is the background, the psychological and historical frame, in the midst of which we see the grand figure of the Teutonic princess, answering exactly to Tacitus's description of her. At the Emperor's side stands the father who has betrayed her—a spectator of the humiliation of his own child. The human emotions thus added to the historical features of the scene bring it home to us with strong reality. It is not only the noble heroine, the wife of the great Arminius, that enlists our sympathy, but the woman and the mother. Yet though captive and fettered, such unapproachable dignity surrounds her that we hardly dare to pity her. This work, remarkable not only by reason of its interesting subject but of its stupendous proportions, was followed by a number of pictures all distinguished by this blending of the intensely human and the historical. It is noticeable even in the treatment of a person for whom we can have so little sympathy as Henry VIII. Piloty painted two pictures of the kingly Bluebeard, into both of which he introduced the figure of Anne Boleyn. In the first we see the festival at which he makes known his love to her, drawing her



A BANNER FROM THE FRAUEN-  
KIRCHE, MUNICH



FOUNTAIN FOR ROME. (Ebert, Leubach, and Schütz.)

as Henry VIII. Piloty painted two pictures of the kingly Bluebeard, into both of which he introduced the figure of Anne Boleyn. In the first we see the festival at which he makes known his love to her, drawing her

aside from the glittering throng to plead his cause. The second represents the fatal moment when he repudiates the once-loved wife in order to give himself up to the pursuit of a new passion. The first scene is full of brilliancy and voluptuous enjoyment; the second of despair and the presentiment of death—emotion forming the keynote to the pictures, whatever may be the historical setting.

To the category of historical martyrs belong Galileo and Christopher Columbus, both of whom Piloty took as subjects, although, of course, the result was not so portrait-like as with Anne Boleyn or Henry VIII. Piloty used to say of this king that he knew of no historical character whose outward appearance tallied so exactly with his mental qualities, who *looked* so entirely what he *was*. Galileo and Columbus were to a certain extent ideal figures, princes in the world of thought, whose outward appearance is not so familiar to us, and on whom he could lavish all the wealth of his imagination. He has painted them alone, far from the petty stir of human life. Galileo is in prison, a captive between four narrow, pitiless walls; but they cannot confine his mighty intellect, and on his face lies an unruffled calm; he has discovered the great law of Nature. "E pur si muove." Columbus stands on the deck of his ship gazing at the stars, apart from his doubting and unenterprising companions. His efforts have been unappreciated, but yet he *knows* towards what goal he is steering—to a new world!

But the most touching of Piloty's historical pictures—looking at them from that emotional point of view



THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS. (First Sketch.)

of which we have spoken is the one which treats of the captivity of the luckless Dauphin, son of Louis XVI., in the house of Simon the shoemaker; for what can be more heartrending than anguish and suffering on the face of a little child? The contrast between the high-born, delicately-nurtured boy and his brutal surroundings, in which he seems to catch some hint of his sad fate, strikes us forcibly; we see in it the tragical fatality that ends a dynasty by visiting the sins of the fathers on the children.

Piloty shortly afterwards had an opportunity of visiting the scene of this tragedy, for on the opening of the Paris Exhibition of 1867 he was deputed by the Bavarian Government to represent the interests of Munich art in the great French capital. It was an appointment that did him much honour, but that also entailed much that was arduous. However, he was more than repaid for his trouble by the success he achieved, and by the pleasure he found in the sight of the art treasures that came pouring in from every side. There, too, he came in contact with several interesting personages. It was here that he first made the acquaintance of Meissonier, who invited him to his country house and showed him every detail of his atelier. He also associated much with Bonnat; and the deep impression that this first visit to Paris had made on Piloty naturally influenced the work to which he devoted himself during the next few years.

Then it was that another and most honourable appointment was offered him, being nothing less than the Directorship of the Berlin Academy of Art. The position was financially a brilliant one and socially most highly thought of—circumstances of which Piloty was fully aware; but he felt that to leave his home and the school in which he had done so much would be too great a sacrifice. So he decided to refuse this offer, as he had done a former one, and to remain faithful to the field of labour that had already brought him so much success and so much happiness. Needless to say his Munich friends did all in their power to prevent his regretting this determination, knowing that it was before all things to her advantage to keep the school up to its present high mark. The town therefore hastened to show her appreciation of the great master by giving him an order on a grand scale. The new Rathhaus, designed by Prof. Hauberrisser, was nearly finished, and the central hall was to be adorned by a painting from the history of Munich. Piloty was requested to undertake it, and it occupied him for ten years.

Although the general outline of the subject had been given, the whole arrangement was left to the artist, who finally decided on uniting all the personages who had been instrumental in raising the city to its present greatness on one huge canvas. The difficulty of grouping so many figures who had no actual connection with one another was of course enormous, not to speak of the arrangement of the correct historical costumes, in a period that ranged from the time of the Hohenstaufens to the beginning of the present century. But Piloty's art carried him so triumphantly over every obstacle that one never remembers there were any, and the whole effect of the picture is harmonious in the highest degree. It was hung a year ago in the great hall, and is decidedly one of the sights of Munich. It would be a pleasant task to undertake its description here did it not involve going too far into historical details. Professor Theodor Neigel, however, has made it the subject of an interesting treatise, remarkable for learning and taste, in which he describes each figure in its historical connection.

It is scarcely necessary to point out what an amount of trouble the artist must have taken in order to find out everything necessary to the accomplishment of his object. He had to make himself thoroughly



A TEUTON MAIDEN PURSUED BY ROMANS.



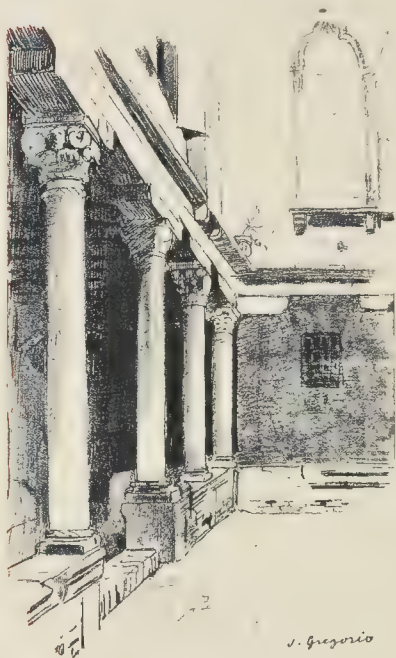
acquainted with each one of these historic persons, so as to give them their due place. Every class, from the emperor to the simple artisan, had its representative, for the ultimate result was to concentrate all the worth, all the power, of a great community in one artistic whole. When the picture was finished Piloty received a vote of thanks from the city of Munich. The address was recorded in a document which was handed over to him with much ceremony, and which is in itself a masterpiece of writing and ornamentation.

These remarks have led us away somewhat from the chronological sequence of the events in Piloty's career. The stupendous works which we have mentioned required years for their completion, and it would be beyond the province of this article to follow them in their progress; we must, therefore, content ourselves with recording anything noteworthy connected with their beginning or completion. To this end we must take the reader

back to the time when the great Senate House picture was first suggested to the painter.

When, in 1873, the Vienna Exhibition was opened, Piloty was made Chairman of the Committee appointed to sit in judgment on the pictures that were contributed, Meissonier being at the head of the whole Art Department. Those were pleasant days, full of instruction and interest, and such a man as Piloty must have hailed this meeting with colleagues of every nationality with the greatest joy. Famous men in the world of art were here gathered together, who, even if they differed, never forgot that in their profession, more than in any other, it is impossible to have rigid conformity to one style. They well knew how much each nation contributed in its own way to the Republic of Art, and their intercourse was unvarying in its ease and pleasantness, whether during their inspection of the galleries or during the charming evenings that followed, though forty men were there gathered together. Before they finally dispersed the gentlemen were all photographed in one great group, arranged by Piloty; though it is of less value as a picture, than as an outward sign of the brotherly union that existed between them.

Scarcely a year after Piloty's return, when he was steadily engaged upon his own vast work, a very important event occurred. Wilhelm von Kaulbach died on the 7th of



SAN GREGORIO, VENICE.

April, 1874, a few days after he had celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of his Directorship of the Munich Academy, and the question of a successor had naturally arisen. Every one was unanimous in agreeing to the official nomination of the man who had in reality been at the head of affairs for years, and the students received the announcement of Piloty's appointment as Director of the School he had first entered as a boy of eleven with every sign of rejoicing. A magnificent dinner was given in his honour at one of the Munich "Keller," but a festival arranged by his own students on the lake at Starnberg was infinitely more picturesque. With that infinite resource that belongs alone to artists, they arranged a scene out of doors, taking advantage of the natural features of the landscape, one of them, disguised as the Astrologer in Piloty's picture, prophesying all sorts of good things to the new Director.

This change, of course, laid a fresh burden of labour and responsibility on the artist's shoulders, for, added to his work as teacher, he had now to attend to the various duties connected with the management of an

institution whose inmates increased in number every year, while its widespread fame rendered it indispensable that these duties should be carried out ably and conscientiously.

Meanwhile, a productive nature like Piloty's was not likely to give up its own sphere of action. The Senate House picture occupied a great part of his spare time, but it was not the only one he worked at. One of the pictures that date from this period is that of *Girondists on their Way to Execution*, a subject in which Piloty had always been much interested. In fact, dividing his pictures into three groups, the third would belong to the time of the French Revolution, considering the Thirty Years' War and the Roman period as the two first. To the Roman period belongs a magnificent picture, of which a copy is here given, of a Teuton maiden, in all the glory of her red gold hair, who has been pursued into the woods by Roman soldiers, and now stands at bay, having exhausted her store of arrows. Among the sacred pictures we may mention that of the *Wise and Foolish Virgins*, which came out a year or two ago, and was very well received. A copy is appended; it is therefore unnecessary to describe it here.

However capable Piloty's mind was of enduring the strain and excitement of all this work, his health began to fail under it. An internal disorder from which he had long suffered, and for which he had repeatedly sought a cure at Karlsbad, and of the celebrated specialist, Leube, in Erlangen, increased to such an extent that the doctors insisted on his giving up a great part of his work. So with a heavy heart he retired from the School, after twenty-five years of uninterrupted activity. A great farewell ceremony took place, and from every side came expressions of sincere regret at his departure. He had gone to Venice to be out of the way of the speeches and ovations, but a deputation of art students came from Munich and sought him out. On his return, when he was staying quietly at his country house at Ambach, they gave a grand festival in his honour. One lovely autumn evening—the 26th September, 1881—there came a gaily-decked fleet of boats over the Lake of Starnberg. At the sound of music the master came down to the shore, and in the red gleam of the torchlight recognised a band of his former pupils—"his boys," as he often called them. They brought him a splendid silver goblet, in the form of a ship riding triumphantly upon a stormy sea, a fit emblem of his own life. The revels were carried on far into the night, and in their memory they lived over again the twenty-five years of labour that he had shared with them.

After this Piloty took up his old quarters at the Academy, but with its public duties much of the stir and activity had gone out of his life. Now he can devote himself entirely to his own plans, although he is often interrupted by visitors who come for a quiet chat. Many a time have I sat there through peaceful afternoons, and I hardly know which I like best, to watch him painting or to hear him talk of it.

Meanwhile it is growing dark in the spacious studio—time to go home. Palette and brush are quickly put away, the drawings and designs gathered up, the "Herr Director" lights a fresh cigar, takes his broad-leaved hat, locks the door behind him, and we turn homewards.

Home! the word has a pleasant sound, even to the labourer who returns from his work to his poor hut and bare walls, but it has a far greater charm when it means such a home as a man like this can make for



A COLD SPRING IN VENICE. (1864)  
Piloty sketched by his pupil, Hermann Kaulbach. H. Kaulbach, the master.  
(Piloty.)

himself. He opens his house and his heart to you, and the treasures of his mind, which he carefully locks away from the outer world, he shares with you here without restraint. Every picture on the wall, every book on the table, seems part of his personality, and gains in interest thereby, while even what is missing becomes characteristic by its absence.

Piloty's house is situated in the Briennerstrasse, one of the most distinctly artistic quarters of the city. Hard by is that splendid pile the "Propylæa," and the great Königsplatz, on the one side of which stands the Glyptothek, and on the other the buildings of the Exhibition, two temples of art in the purest classic style of architecture. Were the sky blue and the sun hot enough one might easily fancy oneself in Greece instead of Germany, so completely do these buildings follow the antique. The Briennerstrasse is continued beyond the Propylæa; the house to the left belonged to Richard Wagner when he lived in Munich; next door is the Schack Gallery, well known as a centre of modern art; and just beyond that again stands Piloty's house.

Passing through the gateway, a long passage leads you to the door, for the master has built his home in the middle of the garden instead of near the street. It is plain and unpretending; but within all is artistic, beautiful, and original.

Besides indulging his own taste, Piloty always found friends ready and willing to help him in the decoration of his house. His school played so important a part in his public life that it was only natural it should influence his home. Everywhere we see the traces of friendly hands: one designed the balcony; another superintended the furniture of the "drinking-room;" a third picked up that rare piece of furniture when he was travelling; a fourth contributes one of his own pictures—thus attempting in some degree to repay the many kindnesses they owe their former master. And the whole life of the house is characterised by this wide-hearted friendship.



THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN

On entering the house we come first to the dining-room, with its inlaid wooden floor and long table, usually expected to accommodate a large assembly of children and guests. A grey parrot greets you from the window-sill; against the wall stands the piano, for music is much loved in this house; it is so pleasant, when the elder gentlemen are sitting over their wine, to hear the fresh young voices mingling in some old German ballad. Our eye is next attracted to the pictures on the wall. There is *Cinderella*, and next to her an engraving of the *Battle of the Huns*, by which the youthful Kaulbach rose to fame; besides which there are copies of Piloty's own pictures, showing the successive stages of his progress in art. In this room, so entirely given up to well-earned rest and friendly intercourse, we are everywhere confronted with the fruit of work well and honestly done, and we feel that they are good spirits looking down upon us from the walls, the best companions we can wish for, to share our home joys.

Next door is the pretty, cosy sitting-room, sacred to the lady of the house. "Is that not by Schwind?" I asked of Piloty, pointing to a little moonlit picture on the wall, representing Hagen von Tronje, the grim



warrior of the "Nibelungenlied," as he rows across the Rhine by night, and hears the warning voices of the water-nixies.

"To be sure," he answered, "and the way in which I came by it is perhaps almost as characteristic of the painter as the picture itself. We were neighbours at the Academy, and one morning, when I happened to be in his studio, the gilder came with the picture-frame and his bill. In his rough way Schwind began to abuse the 'everlasting bills,' and when I laughingly remarked that I should be delighted to pay for the frame if only I might have the picture with it, he stamped his foot, and said: 'If you will pay the bill you shall have the picture!' And it was no sooner said than done. This is the dignified manner in which we sometimes become possessed of perfect gems of art."



THE DESTROYER OF HIS HONOUR.

The little "drinking-room," on the other side of the dining-room, is a picture in itself, and a perfect treasury of old German furniture. Ceiling, doors, and cabinets are all in dark wood that must be hundreds of years old. There stands the stove with its thick green tiles, like an impregnable little fortress; and bright tankards glitter seductively from their shelf along the wall. There would be time to tell the story of a lifetime before you came to the bottom of one of them; for the men for whom they were made drank long and deep. And who would not be tempted to do the same in such a retreat, so dim and cool in summer, so warm and cosy in winter?

But this room cannot be compared with one which we enter on reaching the next floor, the so-called "Gothic" studio, which is the artistic crown of the house and the centre of the family life. For here it is that in the evening Piloty designs his pictures, and that all household questions are discussed. "This is where

we settle everything," he said, with a pleasant look of confidence in his kindly eyes. Over the door is a scroll bearing the inscription: "Laurentius Gedon built this room, Anno 1869." It had been done as a surprise by his wife while Piloty was away in Venice. He was to find it finished on his return, and nobody was more capable of producing this masterly result in the shortest given time than Gedon. He was a sculptor by profession, and had not studied under Piloty, though, in the course of a long intimacy, his tastes had been strongly influenced by the training and traditions of Piloty's school. Gedon's fame as a decorator is known throughout Europe, and it was he who arranged the German Art Department, with such brilliant success, at Paris for the Exhibition of 1878; he was also called upon to do the same in Vienna, where the original arrangement had left much to be desired.

Thus we can easily understand with what energy and enthusiasm he set to work upon his friend's beautiful apartment. He said little, and made no fuss, but he knew always exactly what was wanted and where to get it. If he could not find the right thing in Munich, he would take the first train and go off to Augsburg or Nuremberg, and never returned empty handed. In this way he found that magnificent old press, with its



THE STUDIO

massive locks, that had doubtless belonged to some guild in the days of the Free Cities; the delicate wrought-iron work of the raised alcove that leads into the balcony (see the Interior on page 188); the carved frieze of the cornice, and the candelabra hanging from the ceiling, formed by a magnificent pair of antlers with sixteen points. There is scarcely a piece of furniture in the whole room that is not genuine; but the most beautiful thing of all is the Venetian tapestry, which is not without its little romance.

Piloty had seen and admired it for some time in a shop in Venice, and would have bought it had the price not been so high. At last, just before he left, he made up his mind to have it at any cost. When he arrived at the shop, however, the dealer shrugged his shoulders, and regretted that the tapestry had been sold to some one else. Piloty was in despair at his own delay, picturing the unique and costly work of art in the hands of some stupid speculator to whom it was nothing more than a bale of merchandise. Now that he had lost the prize it seemed more desirable than ever in his eyes. What was his astonishment, at the following Christmas time, to find, among the other gifts set out for him, the tapestry he had thought was lost to him for ever! His wife had bought it herself, and, to add to the surprise, had carried it off concealed in her own luggage.

We have now seen the artist's house in his hours of quiet and retirement; but it shows to the greatest advantage when filled with a gay and happy crowd. Sunday evening is Piloty's favourite time for gathering a large circle of his friends around him; formerly these meetings took place regularly, but now, as he is obliged to be excessively careful of his health, whenever he is able to bear the fatigue. Here you will meet with representatives of every branch of art, science, literature, and society; and here the peculiar characteristic of Munich intercourse is particularly apparent; for there is hardly a city in Germany, perhaps not in Europe, where society is less exclusive, and where there is so little restraint: "caste" is ignored, or rather defied.



THE DRAWING-ROOM

It is the same even in the largest receptions, and in every incident of life. The army does not keep nearly so much to itself as in the northern cities; the highest dignitary, the most eminent man of letters, does not hesitate to sit down to rest and refresh himself in some wayside inn beside the humble peasant; and the aristocracy is infinitely more cordial and sociable here than elsewhere. This ease and freedom, which characterises public life, naturally influences private society and intercourse. The only distinction that meets with recognition is that of character or genius, and the chief charm of such society is its infinite variety.

When these friendly gatherings occur there is always plenty of mirth and light-heartedness, for artists love to be surrounded by youth and beauty. Piloty always makes a point of inviting young people to his evenings. While the older people are listening to the music downstairs, or sitting over their wine, upstairs in the great



drawing room dancing is going on, and the Venetian mirrors reflect the blooming faces of couples whirling past the wide fireplace that Rudolf Seitz designed; and the beautiful painted faces gaze calmly down upon the equally beautiful living ones. Amongst them is a portrait of Piloty's mother, painted by Tischendorf; the one of his wife, hanging over the sofa, is by Leubach; and a second one, near the door, by Hans Makart. It is a half-length picture, in the gorgeous costume of a sixteenth-century burgher's wife, and seems almost to have been done by magic, for the painter cast it on the canvas, as it were, in a few hours on a journey through Munich. The rest of the collection consists of three or four large sketches by Defregger (his *Last Time of Asking* and the *Return of the Victor*), an exquisite landscape by Edward Schleich, and a few other cabinet



THE DRAWING-ROOM (South).

the first German novelist of his day, and the most delightful man in Munich, whether you meet him in a drawing-room or in his own study. He is hardly conscious of the piercing gaze of that tall thin figure in the arm-chair, whose artist-eyes, behind the quaint round glasses of his spectacles, are fixed upon his face; who looks as if he were making a mental portrait, or trying to improve upon the one he long since painted. But that was years ago, when Franz Leubach's name upon a picture had not the same value that it has now.

"How are you, Excellency?" whispers a Privy Councillor as he passes, when the music stops and conversation becomes general. But the gigantic, fair-bearded Excellency is too much taken up with his neighbour's words of wisdom to notice the greeting. For they are discussing the millions to be voted at the next meeting of parliament, and the little stout man, who looks so energetic, clear-headed, and withal so kind-

pictures. But young people cannot be expected to pay much attention to anything when the strains of the "Blue Danube" waltz are sounding through the room. They have something else to do with their eyes, and to them the pleasure of the moment means more than all the pictures in the world.

Downstairs, the others are sitting round the long table; now joining in the lively conversation, or again absorbed in the music. But these are not the strains of the "Blue Danube," but Schumann's and Chopin's pathetic and ravishing melodies, or the majestic tones of the great Beethoven. Though they all hear the same chords, each one is occupied with his own thoughts. That remarkably handsome man, leaning against a pillar, whose intellectual face still wears a look of youth, as if it were loath to leave him, has some half-finished poem in his mind; you can see it in the wrapt expression of the blue eyes, that contrast so oddly with the jet black hair. It is Paul Heyse,

hearted, is no less a personage than the Minister of Finance, the victorious hero who prevailed so successfully against our most dreaded enemy—the Deficit.

"Are we not going to hear some poetry this evening?" asks the mistress of the house from the end of the table; but before the poet can begin another voice cries: "But first let us have one of Hornstein's songs." Both requests are complied with, and the composer sits down and accompanies his own setting to Béranger's charming songs. It is past midnight before the guests think of returning home. The young people are persuaded with difficulty to leave their dancing. They stroll away in the moonlight, and the next morning finds the house returned to its ways of thought and work.



THE DRAWING-ROOM (North)

On the top floor, where the noise of the street cannot reach him, and nothing is heard but the singing of the birds outside in the garden, Piloty has his painting-room. It is a pleasant, homely room, and comfortable rather than showy; very different in this from his vast official studio at the Academy. There he appears as the Director, the professor, the famous artist—here as the thoughtful large-hearted man; there, no doubt, he found greater inspirations, he carried out wider plans; but here he shows the finer and more ideal side of his nature. The joy of home life and the joy of creating are here happily combined; they live side by side under the same roof; and a studio at home has a character and stamp of its own, somewhat of the soothing charm of a household chapel, a sanctuary to the household gods.



As it was never intended as a show place, or a reception-room, it is very simply furnished, without, however, losing that unmistakable look of distinction that always characterises the surroundings of great men. A soft thick carpet deadens the sound of footsteps; in the old carved chests are lovely sketches and designs; withered palm-branches wave above a picture of the great *Maximilian*, while a marble *Ariadne* gazes unmoved at the motley scene around her—which revives in us memories of every age—and at the work which stands completed on the easel.

The painter has called it *Under the Arena*, representing in it the idea of Christianity rising victorious, even in death, over that heathendom it was soon to overthrow utterly. The personification of this mighty



THE DINING-ROOM (North).

historical conflict would seem to present almost insurmountable difficulties, but the painter has achieved it in a masterly manner. There are but few figures in the picture, but they are wonderfully powerful, and the scene in which they take part is a deeply moving one. It is well known that there were vaults beneath the Roman arena, into which the victims who were killed in combat with the wild beasts were let down by ropes and laid in openings in the wall, which were then closed by heavy stone slabs. The priests had to pass through here on their way to the special entrance reserved for them into the circus. The band of priests has gone on in front, but one of them, a youth in the first flush of his manhood, lingers behind and gazes silently at the lovely corpse that has been cast upon the ground like a withered flower. The eyes are closed, the meek hands folded, and only a thin white robe covers the fair form that, lying on a coarse red cloth, seems to glimmer half ghostly,



half angelic, in the dim light. How she might have shone and triumphed among the beauties of Rome; what happiness might it have been hers to give and to receive! Would that this fair flower had lived to blossom in the sunshine of love. Why had she chosen death? Thoughts such as these cloud the brow of the young priest under his flowery wreath. His heart is even more deeply touched by her heroism than by her beauty. It is she who should be crowned, not he. Then he catches sight of the little wooden cross still clasped in her lifeless hand. Ah, there lay the secret of her strength. And a silent struggle begins in his soul; dead lips sometimes speak louder than living ones. How grand is death in such a form! Before this fearlessness and undaunted faith the whole Roman Empire with its million slaves sinks into insignificance. A great doubt rises in him. A dead girl has converted him!



THE DINING-ROOM (South).

He follows his companions; he wears their garb, the insignia of their office, the symbols of their faith, but he is no longer one of them; his heart has forsaken them! The martyr has converted him!

Such is the historical and spiritual meaning of the picture that Piloty painted for the International Exhibition opened at Munich on the 1st of July, 1883. He told me that he had first thought of it when, during his stay in Italy, he had visited the catacombs where those who had perished in combat with wild beasts had been laid to rest. The picture was painted from beginning to end in the studio we have described, and to which Piloty confines himself more and more now that his failing health obliges him to take the greatest care of it, and to be moderate in the pleasure he most keenly enjoys—that of seeing his friends. Therefore only a favoured few of his acquaintances and visitors have ever been inside this pleasant place, of the existence of which no one would be aware did not its large windows betray it from the outside.

And so, on the threshold of his work-room, let us bid farewell to the master to whose life we have devoted these few pages. We do not intend it as a critical review, but as a friendly description. We know that much that is interesting has been omitted for want of space. That many will disagree with us on various points is highly probable; nor can we demur, for in Art, above all things, every one has a right to his own opinion; but happy is he who can refute criticism by adducing facts. And it certainly is a fact that Piloty numbers amongst his pupils some of the greatest names in the artistic world, and that one and all, no matter what line they afterwards followed, always preserve the most affectionate regard for their master and the school he did so much to raise. By the strength that in him lay he was able to bring out the strong points of others, and no envy marred his pleasure at their success. His life has been throughout a practical illustration of the old German motto, "Können und Gönnen,"—"Ability and Fruition." In good work lies our best happiness. What his hand found to do he did it with all his might.

DR. KARL STIELER (CLARA BELL, Trans.).



LOUIS FÜR NERNST

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HANS MAKART







THE ALLEGORY OF FAME

## HANS MAKART



THE modernising of art—the application of the technical qualities of the great masters to the ideas and sympathies of the century—this has been the lifework of Hans Makart, the Viennese painter; while, at the same time, he has risen so far above his rivals in the field as to become himself a master. His genius was fired by the great models of the Venetian school, while his studies under Carl von Piloty, the famous Munich professor, gave him that freedom of treatment which has enabled him to break away altogether from the formal and pretentious mannerism of the classical school, so-called, of the early part of this century. Makart has in fact brought about in painting a revolution somewhat analogous to that effected by Wagner in music; but he is superior to the Baireuth composer inasmuch as that he never over-excites our nerves by wearying our attention. His delightful scheme of colour attracts and charms the eye; his art is at once fascinating and dignified. He uplifts our imagination into the realm of the ideal, but he has nevertheless a keen eye for human nature as he sees it.

The vivid and glowing tone of his works marks him as belonging to the glorious lineage of Titian and Veronese, and in this respect is more nearly akin to some great French painters—Géricault, Delacroix, and De Camps—than to the Germans, who are generally artificial, cold—in short, bores. Makart is certainly the greatest of living colourists; every one of his canvases is a feast of splendour. Silk, velvet, and sheeny stuffs have no mysteries from him, and he renders their flow, their folds, their changing lights with almost unique



THE ALLEGORY OF PAINTING

grace. Let us hasten to add that all these gorgeous accessories are employed solely for the purpose of giving relief to female beauty, since he loves to represent woman under the most flattering and poetical aspect. No artist is more skilful in representing the life and bustle of a festival, or the vital glow of flesh and blood under a rich costume, among flowers, gaudy hangings, and gorgeous furniture. When he paints a portrait he shows that he does it *con amore*, that it is a joy to him to display the beauty of life and youth. The portrait of the Comtesse Duchâtel, exhibited this year at Vienna, is a perfect specimen of its kind. The fascinating ambassadress, in evening dress, is sitting in a room with bright red hangings, which give her beauty all the relief that can be wished.

These wonderfully successful portraits of women are evidently his favourite style of work; but they would not have been enough to make his name so famous as it is throughout Europe. It is by his large pictures—*The Plague at Florence*, *The Entrance of Charles V. into Antwerp*, *Catherine Cornaro surrounded by her Court*, *Diana Hunting*, *Summer*, *Cleopatra*, and others painted in rapid succession—that he has taken fame by storm. But his most celebrated and popular work—which not only made his name universally known, but cast on Vienna herself the reflection of his glory—was wrought in flesh and blood, the figures belonging to every rank of Viennese society, and the mere grouping necessitating an immense number of actors vying with each other in painstaking good-will. I mean the wonderful procession which marched along the boulevards of Vienna in 1879 in honour of the silver wedding of the Emperor Francis-Joseph. No one who had the good fortune to see it can ever forget that splendid array, in which Agriculture, Manufactures, the Arts, Hunting, each had representative groups dressed in the costume of successive periods of history; those twenty-seven artistic cars, some with ponderous axles and massive wheels, others all lightness and elegance, surrounded by horsemen on splendid chargers and followed by a train on foot, all dressed with the strictest regard to historical accuracy—an ensemble which remains stamped on the memory. The shape and cut of the dresses, the choice of the stuffs, had all been the subject of conscientious care, and the workshops where they were made were built close to the artist's residence, so as to be under his immediate superintendence. The University, the Clergy, the Nobility, all the Trade Guilds eagerly accepted the parts assigned to them in this magnificent tribute of respect to the Emperor; and the city of Vienna was the centre of observation of the world at large.

This, it may safely be said, was the crowning achievement of the artist's life. Not that he has ceased since then from producing, with all the ease of an *improvisatore*, numbers of works which might rank him with Rubens for vigour and vitality, nor failed to develop with steady progress the qualities which stamp him as a master; but his fame could rise no higher; it reached, that day, the highest pitch that the most gifted and ambitious could hope for. Makart had kept a place for himself in this procession; riding a splendid black





LEONARDO DA VINCI (1492).

horse, a Venetian cloak on his shoulders, and wearing the traditional hat and feathers, he might have said, like Victor Hugo's *Ruy Blas*—

*"Et je marche vivant dans mon rêve étoilé."*

(I live and I move in my own starlit dream.)

But we must turn back a little way and record some details of his busy life.

Hans Makart was born at Salzburg in May, 1840; he is now forty-three years old. His native land is the land of Mozart, the great musician, and the mere fact is enough to recall the glorious names which have placed Austria in the front rank of the nations. It has been her good fortune constantly to produce artists who were masters in their own branches of art, and to shine successively in every branch. Haydn and Mozart have made her glorious in the musical world, and great architects have built her palaces and laid out her public places. Even within the reign of the present Emperor, Ferstel, an architect of marked genius, has erected the Votive Church, a gem of Gothic art; and painting—of which Makart is her most illustrious representative—is at the present time nowhere practised with greater success. Austria very willingly leaves philosophy and pedantry to North Germany; she loves pleasure, festivity, and splendour; her instincts are on the side of art, which displays to her its gayest pomp.

Makart was the child of poor parents, but in a land where so many are ready to play the *Mæcenas* this is a minor obstacle. He found patrons while still quite young, and received encouragement from the aristocracy, who afterwards paid him so liberally for his works, and treated him as their equal. He became a student at the Academy of Art at Vienna, and was introduced at an early age to the refined and worldly life of a great capital, where the women are handsome and gracious, where dress is held of the first importance, and where balls and entertainments go on through the greater part of the year. In the midst of such a life the world is seen on its brightest side, and a young man's ideas are developed into a passion for beauty. Makart, born a true artist, and highly gifted by nature, was going through such an education on two sides at once. The impressions he gained in the drawing-room and boudoir seconded the lessons he learnt at the Academy, and the compound influence has left its mark upon his work. The most original artists in the world, the most determined to follow the promptings of their own mind, cannot escape the effects of the society in which they live. These effects are conspicuous in Makart; the life of Vienna has set a permanent seal on the bent of his talent. He can never paint a woman but in the fullest panoply of dress, and can never help endowing her with the grace and beauty that distinguish the ladies of the Austrian capital.

And yet this education, valuable as it was, must inevitably have proved inadequate, since it was of its



ALBERT DÜRER (1471).

nature desultory. It had revealed to the artist the fountain-head which would inspire his work, but he needed to learn the *technique* of his business—the mechanical side of it, so to speak—in short, to learn to paint. This was what he did during his stay at Munich. The young artist, who had no foresight of his subsequent success, hesitated about going there; and any dreams of glory were very near being blotted out by the inevitable money question; he had almost made up his mind to try his fortune elsewhere. But his pecuniary difficulties were once more removed, as they had been before in his life, and Makart's guiding star took him to learn of the famous professor, Carl von Piloty.

Piloty was indeed the leader of a revolution in painting, and the reform of which he was the champion was a vital one. His endeavour was to make head against the school which, by dint of idealising Nature, had lapsed into painting nothing but abstract nonentities. Piloty was bent on returning to reality; he taught his pupils to study Nature, to verify the minute details, and to give light and colour to all they represented. He was a great painter as well as a great teacher, and it was his rare merit that he never tried to force a pupil to adopt his methods of working. He taught the men who came to his studio all the processes of good workmanship, giving them that technical facility without which the greatest genius is impotent; but he was careful to let each one see for himself, and give full play to the personal element—not, in short, to cripple his individuality.

After studying under him for some years, Makart left Munich at the age of four-and-twenty, sure now of his own powers, and only needing that pilgrimage through the art galleries of Italy which is the indispensable finishing touch to the education of an artist. However, he did not turn his steps to Rome. Raphael's Madonnas did not appeal to the specific character of his genius, the gilded glories that crown the virgin martyrs did not attract his sympathies, and there can be no doubt that the Eternal City would have failed to fire his soul. It was at Venice that he found the works which have remained his standard models throughout his career. As a colourist by nature, by instinct, and by preference, he here found his highest dreams sanctioned by the most glorious names. Veronese, Titian, and Tintoretto showed him beyond all doubting the road he must follow; he studied them as his forefathers, feeling himself of their kindred; from them, too, he learnt to assert his individuality even while drawing inspiration from them.

Thus equipped Makart set to work, and his very earliest pictures made an immense sensation. Gifted with a bold and inventive fancy, and freely giving it the reins, he became above all others a daring painter; not shrinking from the nude to display the glow and beauty of flesh; while, on the other hand, he treated the most gorgeous costumes and richest materials as the most obvious adornment of beauty. He has been sometimes accused of appealing exclusively to the eye and the senses; but, after all, is not this the fault of the age and country rather than of the man? Every age, every nation, has its typical ideal, and we cannot



MICHAEL ANGELO BUONAROTTI (1471).

expect to find the solemn spirit of Michael Angelo in Austria in the nineteenth century. Life is too full for seriousness, even in a leisure hour; pleasure is too rife and multiform for purely intellectual enjoyment to be appreciated; painting, to succeed, must charm the sight; a picture that demands reflection is not what is wanted. Makart felt this by intuition, and that is, in fact, what placed him in the front rank from the moment when he entered the lists. His pictures are absolutely devoid of effort—of rhetoric; they are flesh and blood, colour, life, movement. Though he is, in the first instance, a painter of history and genre, he has now and again attacked allegory; but his allegorical pictures have always been absolutely transparent, devoid of the faintest shade of mystery, and intelligible to everybody. Makart has illustrated *The Five Senses*, *The Four Seasons*, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, and each of these works has made a noise in the world. *The Seven Deadly Sins*, which he subsequently named *The Plague at Florence*, was talked of everywhere, and contributed greatly to his reputation. As I have said, the Viennese Master has a voluptuous touch; he selects such subjects as may give full play to an eager temperament and unbridled fancy, and the picture in question is perfectly characteristic of his talent. *The Deadly Sins* do not wear in his eyes the repulsive guise under which they could not have failed to appear to a painter brought up in the traditions of religion—nothing could be more repugnant to his instincts and habits of thought. His first aim is to represent life in its utmost reality, and he shows us living and moving creatures. Enchanting and graceful women gaze amorously at the men who clasp them in their ardent arms; eyes meet, lips smile and part, the flesh palpitates—the figures which here represent “*Le péché mignon*,” as Brantôme has it, are carried away by passion and enslaved by sensuality. In the background old men, made wise by senility, flash furious glances at their younger companions—Envy shown by jealous spite. In front a banquet is laid; wine sparkles in the glasses, and steaming dishes tempt the actors to gluttony; and all the figures are so living and natural that no text of explanation is needed to understand the story. This enormous composition fills no less than three large canvases; it is a revelation of the artist and an epoch in Austrian art.

“These pictures,” writes M. Bachelin in a short sketch called “Hans Makart et ses Cinq Sens,” “have something in them—at once weird and gorgeous, tragical and voluptuous—which attracts and yet disturbs us, like Baudelaire’s poetry. For imagination and audacity the painter is a match for the Carracci or Giulio Romano in their most daring flights.”

I may add that they were painted precisely at the time when Makart, after having exhibited *The Knight and the Nixies*, *Roman Ruins*, and *Love in the Present Day*, settled finally at Vienna, where he soon became admired, celebrated, and fashionable. He was not only appointed professor at the Academy of Art, and entertained everywhere as one of the men of mark of Vienna, he was also endowed by the Emperor, as a reward of merit in the name of the nation, with a large plot of land, on which he had a splendid studio built.





TITIAN (TIZIANO VECELLI) (1477).

Makart was at this time thirty years old. He had already got through a vast amount of work. Besides his large paintings, he had decorated a palace at St. Petersburg, and a library or study for a man of fortune at Vienna; he had sketched the designs for the curtains of the two chief theatres there; and the practical difficulties of life had more than once obliged him to work hastily, but his marvellous facility had come to his assistance. Now his position was easy and secure, his fame extending every day; he had no anxieties for the future, and he could settle himself at home in comfort and for good, and spend his life in cultivating high art at his serene leisure. How thoughtfully, how lovingly has he decorated the studio he owes to the munificence of his sovereign! filling it with treasures collected with such taste that it is a museum, a sanctuary of art. The walls are hung with ancient tapestries—splendid pieces, the admiration of every connoisseur. Exotic plants, palms, vases full of the rarest flowers, stand in conspicuous places in front of huge windows, where the sunshine floods them with light. Finely-wrought chests and caskets, Renaissance furniture, and oriental stuffs display their owner's love for all that dazzles the eye. At the foot of the staircase, under a canopy of rich hangings, a knight on horseback stands prancing in shining armour. On the first floor we find old pottery, incised metal vases, and damascened weapons—a real museum where the taste of an accomplished artist has been allowed full play, filling it by degrees with all that is most curious and most attractive. Such a painter, we see, needs such surroundings; his love of splendour in art and the gorgeous colouring of his pictures could be foreseen from a glance at his dwelling, and if you had not come to look at his work you could lose yourself in examining the miracles of beauty he has succeeded in gathering together. At the same time, he is not a miser to gloat alone over his treasures; every day, at a fixed hour in the afternoon, his rooms are thrown open to the public, who do not fail to take advantage of his liberality. All the rest of the day he works shut up among his treasures, paying visits only in the evening, or going to the theatre or entertainments, for which he still has a passion. Makart always works in solitude; no one ever puts a touch into his paintings but himself; and indeed it cannot but be so, for every picture is the outcome of his individual inspiration.

In his residence, which is near his studio, lives his charming wife, herself a celebrity in her way. Having lost his first wife, by whom he had two sweet children, Makart married for a second time Mademoiselle Bertha Linda, *première danseuse* at the Grand Opera House at Vienna, who gave up a brilliant career to beautify his life and home. This marriage, one of love on both sides, came about under most romantic circumstances; it was celebrated as quietly as possible, and the newly-married pair spent the next few days in the Styrian highlands. Bertha Linda had been the spoilt favourite of the Viennese public, which vehemently regretted her retirement; but she had friends too in the upper circles who have remained faithful and extended their regard to her husband. She was already rich, and at the same time a home-loving woman; she brought order as well as ease into the painter's household, which had before been somewhat left to take care of itself; and Makart,



RAPHAEL SANZIO (1483).

who had been more apt to spend with the recklessness of the artist nature than to account for his expenditure, gladly handed over the management of his affairs to such a faithful and intelligent housekeeper.

His wife found a home, indeed, of which any woman might be proud to be the mistress; the dining-room especially is fit for a palace. The elaboration with which the master has decorated it is, in its way, a marvel, and there certainly can be few in Europe to compare with it. The furniture, the fine old pottery, the sideboards and shelves—all are in harmonious magnificence.

In these circumstances of domestic happiness and luxurious ease Makart now lives and works, painting the great pictures which have made his name famous throughout Europe; provoking discussion no doubt—that is the fate of all strikingly original work—but inevitably attracting the attention of all connoisseurs and conquering the predilections of most. Some of these canvases are too well known for any detailed description to be needed here. *Charles V. entering Antwerp*, for instance, gained the great medal at the International Exhibition at Paris in 1878, and every one must have seen it there. Before that, at the International Exhibition at Vienna, in 1873, Makart had exhibited *The Court of Cyprus doing Homage to Catherine Cornaro*, a vast work about thirty-three feet long, where he could lavish all the intense colours of his palette on a subject to which they were eminently appropriate. Here too he designed the costumes for that great historical procession of which I have already spoken, and which will always be his most popular achievement, whatever else he may do in the future.

Without giving any particulars of his better known works, which are indeed universally famous, I will proceed to describe some of his pictures, chosen intentionally from his latest efforts as especially characteristic of his most dissimilar qualities, so as to give the reader some means of judging for himself.

*Summer*, for instance, recently on view at the Paris Salon, was always surrounded by gazers, and was the subject of endless comment. This, like every other allegorical or imaginative picture, had enthusiastic admirers who felt at once what the painter's idea had been; on the other hand, there were critics who had not taken it in, and who tried to force their views on others. It seems to me, I own, that in this case misapprehension was impossible, and the great mass of the public—whose judgment on such matters is always sound—made no mistake about it. What, indeed, has the painter shown us? An elegant basin in front of a splendid dwelling; women, as beautiful as Makart loves to have them—and knows how to paint them—are coming out of the water or have already left it. Flowers and butterflies complete the scene and add to its charms, while they express beyond mistake the artist's idea. Is not the meaning of such a picture obvious? Any mind accustomed to simple and frank interpretation cannot need much reflection to understand anything so self-evident. It is plain that the leading idea in a scene representing summer must be to show the influence of heat; and from this point of view the figure of a woman, who, having just left the bath, has thrown herself on a heap of cushions before she is more than half-dressed, and holds out her hand for the butterflies to settle



HANS HOLBEIN (1495).

on, is a perfectly natural personification of the fundamental notion. She fills the middle of the picture and is the most conspicuous person in it. To the right are women playing chess; some are dressed, but there are degrees of undress, evidently not without purpose, and the most important figure of the group has only a light white wrapper thrown over her shoulders. The predominant idea is thus carried out in a perfectly logical manner and naturally expressed. With regard to the pool and the architecture of the building in the background, their meaning is easy to identify. It is a bath-house in the style of the Renaissance, where the ladies, being screened from all intrusion, can disport themselves as they will when they come out of the water. This great decorative work has, like other and earlier paintings by Makart, given rise to much discussion, but it is nevertheless a leaf in his crown, and cannot fail to increase his reputation. Our illustration will show the reader the grouping of the figures, and they will see with what skill it has been managed.

The *Cleopatra*—also reproduced here—bears a stamp of historical truth which has not always characterised the painters of this famous beauty; and it must be owned that there were great difficulties, demanding no small courage, in treating so hackneyed a subject. Makart, however, sure of his powers, has twice been so bold as to attempt it. His former picture represented Cleopatra in her barge, in all the pride of her beauty, surrounded by slaves, and going down the river in great pomp to join Antony, who is waiting for her. Every one familiar with artistic news and gossip knows what an extraordinary effect was produced by this picture, which was seen at Munich under conditions somewhat resembling those which heightened the effect of Munkascy's *Christ before Pilate*, in Paris lately. After making his way through several corridors, the spectator suddenly found himself in front of a large, carefully lighted canvas. It was universally admired, and fully deserved to be. When Makart set to work to paint the hapless queen once more he had to compete against his own work. He dared to do it, and in the *Death of Cleopatra* has given us a picture which, to those who can appreciate it, is as fine as the former one. This picture is, however, less full of bustle and accessory; the artist, relying on his own workmanship, has not displayed so much splendour of *mounting*. He trusted to the taste and judgment of the public, and his success has entirely justified his moderation. We have only to compare this picture with the hundreds of others treating the same subject, to see how far it is from that tone of commonplace which had at last sunk all such attempts to a dead level of mediocrity. In Makart's picture the scene has the solemn grandeur which befits the chief actor and her fatal deed. The queen is seen under the threefold prestige of royalty, of suffering, and of beauty—a beauty which even death must respect. Her slaves are going with her to the tomb; two are already lying dead at her feet, but their faces are hidden, the artist having felt that they must be horrible to look upon. Others are standing before her in attitudes expressive of their sympathy for their mistress and their grief at her fatal resolution. Thus everything is so arranged as to direct our attention to the centre of interest in the picture. This is our artist's great gift; his most adverse critics and sternest judges have always





PETER PAUL RUBENS (1577).

acknowledged it. Cleopatra, half nude, is before us in all her beauty; her attitude is that of a woman fully aware of the momentous fatality of the deed she is doing, but doing it with firm resolve. That delicate profile and gracious smile, the triumphant charm that has conquered the rulers of the Roman world, must perish at the sting of the asp, which, as it would seem, feels a spasm of reverence, and evidently hesitates. There is nothing shocking or repulsive in the picture, which is full of the majestic presence of death—voluntarily sought for. We recognise here all the artist's specialities of treatment; everything that could produce an unpleasant impression is kept out of sight, all that is lovely is made the most of, even in death. Makart is in love, in short, with all things beautiful and enchanting; he must have his women fair and seen to the best advantage even in their hours of sadness; he can only see the radiant side of life. From this point of view the *Dying Cleopatra* is his most characteristic work. It reveals the whole nature of the man as he was in his earliest days, and as he will, to all appearance, remain to the end.

Makart is fond of borrowing his subjects from history or the poetic drama. Two pictures of this class must here be mentioned, which are now in the gallery of the Belvedere at Vienna, where they are always surrounded by admirers: *Faust and Margaret*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. The former gives us an opening for comparing the work of the Viennese master with that of Ary Scheffer, who also painted a Margaret. Nothing can be more striking than the contrast between the two masters. Scheffer's Margaret is an ideal creature looking down with angelic modesty, sinless as yet, and thinking of nothing but going to church and saying her prayers. In Makart's picture she looks frankly up into Faust's eyes, and her lips are pouting for a kiss. Clasped in the embrace of this gallant knight, whose sword hangs truculently by his side, she is unconscious of everything but the love that is so new to her. Her hand is thrown round Faust's neck to clasp him to her, and he bends down to kiss her. There is no unnecessary detail; the group is simple and unaffected, the expression of the faces natural and appropriate, and the whole effect is here produced by these simple and solid qualities.

*Romeo and Juliet* is a work of the same stamp; the group is equally natural and expressive. Juliet, leaning from her balcony, holds out her hand to Romeo, who is climbing up to her by a rope-ladder. The lovers are gazing at each other with an intensity of passion that the master has quite succeeded in conveying to the canvas. Their faces are close together, and their eyes speak love as their hands meet and clasp; we see that they are one, heart and soul, and that death itself cannot part them. The result is produced by the simplest means; the master has been able amply to express himself by the play of face and feature, and has no need of that luxurious display of accessories which he loves and has painted on other occasions. Here obviously the interest had to be concentrated exclusively on the two lovers, round whom history and poetry have united to throw a tender glamour. The great painter of scenic festivities chose to be for once a painter of sentiment, and to express it in a way as touching as it is simple. The young girl at her window stands in the most



JOSEPH RIBERA, SPAIN (1586)

perfectly natural attitude; unconscious of herself, devoid of all fear or feeling but love, she is watching her lover, and bends over to him absorbed in the one thought of their meeting. Romeo on his part looks up at Juliet as at his guiding star. The impending catastrophe, which is to end their lives so suddenly, is felt looming over this first meeting; it is foreshadowed in the solemnity which broods over the passion of their greeting. This picture is well worthy of careful study; it reveals a side of Makart's nature which his great historical works had not prepared us for. He stirs our emotion by the very simplest effects and the most natural treatment. The picture of Faust, already mentioned, is a work of the same kind. There are no details or accessories to complicate the impression, but Makart himself stands revealed to us in the way he has felt and expressed the situation. It has already been observed that he dislikes religious subjects. Nature is his standard model, and the passions, which generally have more power over man than their opposite virtues, supply his favourite subjects. He has not cared to show us Margaret on her way to church with downcast eyes; she is Faust's, body and soul, with all the fervour of look and gesture that may avail to convey the idea; there is no possibility of mistake, and yet the action is most simple; and here, as in the *Romeo and Juliet*, the couple stand alone. We are made to feel that Faust is the old man made young again, that he likes wearing his bravery of dress, that Margaret has yielded to his passion with but brief resistance. The supernatural influence which the legend and the poem have agreed in attributing to Faust has held her spell-bound from the first; she has submitted to his superior will before she had time to realise what she was doing or even feeling—all this is told in the picture with unmistakable clearness.

*The Children of Bacchus* is a fuller and not less successful work. A man is holding a cup full of grapes; a woman, who has already drunk of the juice of the vine, has let a mass of hair fall over her shoulders, and her figure and face alike express unqualified joyousness—the pure delight of drinking without the stupidity of drunkenness—the free and unfettered enjoyment of one of the most gracious gifts of Providence to man. The historian of Noah, in the Bible, has striven to warn us against intemperance, and has thought only of a form of immorality which must be kept in check; but our Viennese painter takes a very different view of the matter. His is an exuberant and inventive spirit; he loves "mirth and jollity," he looks on the sunny side of life, and leaves preaching to those who feel that it is their mission to teach men morality and religion. *The Children of Bacchus* is one among several of his pictures in which he confesses this without reserve, while at the same time he shows all his skill as a painter. These gay creatures, it is clear, think that the Creator was in a gracious vein when he formed the vine; they drink wine and they feel that it is good. This is what the artist has meant to tell us, but he has not kept to Molière's motto, he has not said to himself, *Castigat ridendo mores*; that is no business of his. The picture is a pleasant one, and can be seen and comprehended as a whole: it does full justice to the painter's powers.



JACQUES VELASQUEZ (1599—1660)

*A Fellah Woman at the Spring* is, as its name indicates, an Egyptian woman of the labouring class, which by the Nile is a very lowly one. If it were not for her dress, however, she might be supposed to be a woman of higher rank, her attitude is so modest and her action so dignified. She is grave, nay, somewhat sad, as is natural; she carries her child in her arms, and a pitcher in her right hand. Makart has carefully studied the costume of her class, and represented it with precise accuracy; in such details he is never wanting; he may be trusted implicitly for the colour, shape, and texture of a dress. The fellah woman's features are regular, and have beauty too of a kind, but of course not the least like the beauty of a Viennese, an Englishwoman, or a Parisian. Such an artist as Makart makes no confusion of types; his brush seizes on every shade of difference, so that no one can misapprehend them. He gives grace and beauty to every female figure, because to him a woman must be beautiful; but he can see and give variety of expression, of gesture, of attitude, in such a way as to represent not only the feelings and emotions, but the social rank of each individual. His *Fellah Woman* has been compared with *La Source* by Ingres, and in some ways such a comparison is possible, keeping in mind of course the difference between a woman—a mother—and a personification. But great as our reverence is for the great Frenchman, we think Makart has the advantage as to colouring and vitality.

This naturally leads us to a closer consideration of the character of his genius; but first we will discuss two objections that have been raised to his work, and which recur in a highly appreciative essay on it by M. Bachelin, "Hans Makart et ses Cinq Sens." The Viennese master—so it is said—lacks spiritualism, he paints the apotheosis of the flesh; he is too completely satisfied with external beauty, finely-shaped limbs, gorgeous dresses. Nude flesh is what he prefers to show us whenever he is not compelled by the nature of his subject to cover and conceal it. He is very ready, to be sure, to dress it out with necklaces, jewels, and ornaments of every kind, but sensuous beauty is still obviously that which attracts him most. This is the first accusation which, as we have said, has often been brought against him even by kindly critics who have done ample justice to the master's distinguished merit. It may at once be admitted that there is some truth in it; still, we must beware of exaggerating the fact, and still more of stating it as a generalisation. It has been fully granted that Makart delights in beauty of form and colour, and is always eager to give it prominence, for no stern morality can ever commend itself to his nature or to the character of his talent. He has studied nature from the life, and does homage to the Creator after his own fashion by representing to the best of his ability that crowning masterpiece of creation—man. Like all great artists, he is inspired by a powerful afflatus which carries away those who look at his pictures and lifts them into a loftier sphere; but, instead of directing their eyes heavenwards, like the painters of the Middle Ages or the followers of Raphael, he keeps them fixed on human beauty, of which he himself is so ardent an admirer that he longs to make others admire it too. But, in all this, is he not fairly representing an age which has lost all the religious fervour of past times, and troubles itself but little about





PAUL REMBRANDT (1606).

systems of philosophy? His pictures would not be surrounded as they are by admiring crowds, or covered inch by inch with gold by purchasers, if they did not answer to some need or taste of the public of our day.

Let us look back for a moment at a former period of painting in Germany—at the beginning of this century—nay, even at the French school of that date, the school of David. Think of the Academies (a name long in fashion among drawing-masters), where stiffness of limb and hardness of line were the chief characteristics; remember how many painters, by aiming at the Ideal, ended by producing creatures devoid alike of colour and of movement. These suffice to mark the reaction which has set in against that school, and which found in Makart one of its most fervid disciples. After all, does it matter that he should glorify the flesh when he makes it poetical, and appeals to the mind as well as to the eyes? The objection would only be valid if he chose licentious subjects addressed solely to the grosser senses. But who can accuse Makart of anything of the kind? He has succeeded in painting beauty as fair as a dream; he elevates the mind while he delights the eye, he attracts our admiration of physical beauty only to make us understand the works of the Creator. Besides, in every work we have examined we have traced the hand of a painter skilled in representing the play of features so as to reflect strongly and clearly every feeling of the human soul. The real truth, to put it plainly—and this is the fact that underlies the charge we are discussing—is that Makart, in painting the *Poem of Life*, has thrown off the swaddling-bands of the abstract ideal as the old school understood it. Son of a pleasure-loving land, and dwelling in a capital where festivities are an indispensable element of life, he has chosen to paint bustle, gaiety, and splendour; for him Art must render life and stir, and not lie dreaming in idealism pushed to such an extreme as to force her into wrong roads on every side. He found on his palette a *symphony* of colour in the truest sense, and this gave his work its most conspicuous and characteristic quality. His power as a colourist has left its stamp on all he has done; exuberant vitality has found its vent in that lavish display of colour which reveals the real and peculiar individuality of the painter. This it is that raises him above all contemporary Viennese artists, and has given him a place by himself in modern art. But it is unjust to say, as some of his critics have said, that he has cared solely for “the lust of the eyes and the pride of life;” he has also touched and stirred the heart to noble aspiration.

Another charge, truer and better founded, has been brought against his treatment of perspective. Though very skilful in grouping his figures, and in concentrating them with reference to the central interest of the picture, he is apt to place them all too much on one plane, and pays too little attention to the due separation of the foreground from the remoter distances. This objection is a juster one than the former; at the same time, it is not impossible to answer it. If we look carefully, we shall see that an effect of light not unfrequently makes up for this apparently faulty arrangement. Makart has been in the East, and his memory is full of its blue skies and dazzling lights, while he has by nature a passion for rich and gaudy materials; he, like his favourite

master and model, Veronese, sees relief as produced by light, and he makes it do duty, not merely for light and shade, but to give prominence and distance to his figures. By degrees of tone he contrives to show that some are in front of the others without troubling himself about any theory of foreground and background, which he treats as a mere academical rule. Other great painters before Makart had tried in the same way to represent effects of lights by a simple and unforced mode of treatment, but none, to our thinking, had succeeded so well since Paul Veronese. The lower tones throw up the lights in such a way as to concentrate all our attention on the front figures, leaving the others in shadow. Possibly a considerable degree of experience as a connoisseur is necessary to make this method intelligible and satisfactory, and this may account for the criticism we have endeavoured to reply to. The general public, for whom Makart—accustomed as he is to the aristocracy of Vienna—has not invariably tried to paint, needs too much reflection fully to comprehend the effects of his wonderful skill. But we must not try to popularise art too much; we should end by debasing it.

Makart is fond of painting great historical or imaginary scenes, in which dress plays an important part—festivals and splendid ceremonies; it is somewhat surprising, therefore, to find him so successful with allegorical subjects, in which, however, he is singularly happy. *Evening* (see page 195), among others, is one of those delightful little compositions which haunt our memory long after we have seen and studied them. Nothing can be simpler than it looks—a nymph wrapping herself in a veil, and floating away through the air towards a star, which burns with intense radiance in the blue vault of heaven. But, with all this apparent simplicity, how graceful it is, and how well conceived! The purity of outline which can be traced through the transparent drapery, and the lovely modelling, give this creature of mist the grace and style of a goddess; indeed, if the figure were mythological, it would be easy to believe that the painter meant to represent the presiding goddess of sleep. But the personification is quite independent of this idea, and perfectly clear without any reference to antiquity for its explanation. The nymph, sailing towards the star, shows us at once that this is the hour when the sun, having sunk below the horizon, is giving way to the myriad fires that sparkle in the sky on a cloudless night, and we recognise the artist's love of elegant and noble form. It has often been said that ladies of rank in Vienna have thought it an honour to sit as models to Makart. Without inquiring too closely into the truth of the statement, when we see the exquisite modelling of the women he paints and their aristocratic delicacy of limb in his most famous works, it certainly seems possible. Here, for instance, in *Evening*, the ankles—particularly the one which is uncovered by the robe—are very refined in drawing; it is not the leg of a woman of humble birth, but that of a fine lady—a goddess.

*Spring* is a more elaborate composition, but no less intelligible, and equally worthy of study. Under the shade of lofty trees, whose fresh greenery is a rest to the eye, a number of pages in light-hued dresses, rose-coloured as their boyish cheeks, are holding saddled horses, and awaiting a bevy of elegant dames who are seen loitering under the bowery verdure. We are irresistibly reminded of a popular song—

"Mon beau page aimé de la reine,  
Mon beau page aimé."

(Bonny page the Queen doth love,  
Bonny page I love.)



STUDY OF DRAPERY  
(Fac-simile from the Artist's Sketch-book)

It is the season when the sap flows more warmly in the trees and the blood more hotly in the veins, when love stirs the heart and the senses. It is the very hour when the butterflies, flitting from flower to flower, carry the fertilising pollen, and all Nature, glad to be released from the chills of winter, is revelling and expanding in the soft breath of spring. The ladies, seated on the grass, drink in the air almost with intoxication, and those who have joined the pages seem undecided as to whether they shall linger and chat, or mount the horses which look proud of bearing so fair a burden. Here again, as usual, it is more by his use of colour and light than by the actions of the figures that Makart has expressed his allegorical idea. The hue of the foliage and grass, the green so dear to the Viennese, harmonises with the pages' dresses and the light soft tints of the ladies' drapery. Presently it will be too hot, the leaves will turn yellow, the grass will be burnt up, and the fair dames will not care to mount their palfreys. If it were autumn, we should see fruits turned to gold by the sun, bunches of grapes to tempt the eye and cool the lips. We cannot for an instant doubt that spring alone is so fresh and



THE SIEGE OF A FORTRESS IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY (FRAGMENT)

(Fac-simile from the Artist's Sketch-book).

green as this; spring alone suggests such pleasures; and, as a fact, the most obtuse or the most perverse accept and read the meaning of this picture.

These last pictures, irrespective of all questions of perspective and colouring, deserve our attention on other grounds, for they betray a gradual transformation in the mind of the artist which is already very perceptible. We can see that he has ceased to give himself up to the capricious inspiration of the moment, and to let his brush wander with fevered eagerness hither and thither over the canvas. He brings more thought and study to his work as a whole than was formerly his wont; and above all—which is the most marked feature of his progress—his drawing is more satisfactory to the scientific students of form, who had more than once complained, and with reason, that Makart sacrificed correctness to harmony of colour and brilliancy of effect. This accusation has ceased to be true; he is now as careful with his drawing as with his colouring. While giving the reins to his fertile and vivid imagination, he brings it under command, and does not forget that the most gorgeous palette may without derogation be subservient to the most perfect correctness and purity of form.





A. J. H. V. G. M. A. F. S. I. N.

The saving influence of the cultivated woman who is the companion of his life has had something to do with this change for the better. With that generous instinct which sometimes rises to the height of inspiration, she resolved to have some share in her husband's fame. To increase it was impossible, for he was at the height of success; but she determined to purify its splendour, to dissipate every shadow that might fall on it, so as to leave his critics no excuse for attack. By her wise suggestions she succeeded in making him less careless as

to accuracy of drawing, and more sensitive to the justifiable strictures which were occasionally made on his finest works. Makart, as he follows this straighter path, cannot fail to perceive that his later works will gain by it even in general effect, which is what he has always chiefly aimed at. They will lose nothing of their brilliant gorgeousness, while they will gain in faultlessness of detail, and approach more nearly to that perfection which must be the artist's ideal in every branch of his art.

Let us now follow Makart into the province of architecture, in which his imagination has ventured on some bold flights. All the arts, no doubt, are brothers; they have all a common origin in that feeling for beauty which elevates the mind far above all vulgar thoughts and needs. To build, for instance, one of those poems in stone, a Gothic cathedral, a fervent inspiration was needed combined with the most perfect scientific knowledge. The architects who raised those soaring spires, those accurately-rounded towers, must have been fired by that sacred spark without which no true artist can exist. A genius for architecture is by no means incompatible with a genius for painting, and the palaces which Makart has sketched in some ways prove the fact. We cannot say that they are practically planned as dwellings, and they would certainly have the drawback of being enormously costly to build, nay, merely to decorate. Modern architecture is necessarily subject to conditions on these points to which Makart has hardly, perhaps, paid due attention; but, after all, these details can only be learnt by experience, and he would have mastered them as well as another if his tastes had not led him in a different direction. Thus, with these reservations, we can only admire the wonderful fancy which crowns a building with groups and statues in endless variety. The effect is charming: sumptuous in the highest degree, and at the same time light and graceful. The infinite



FAUST.

variety of detail never interferes with the elegance and originality of the whole.

Here, again, Makart is all himself, in the instincts of his nature and the special aptitude of his talent. Do not look for severe and stately monuments, suggesting strength and grandeur, stamped with the character of solidity and permanence. His architecture, like his painting, has assimilated all that is gay and bright in life; it represents the luxury and the splendour of wealth. What he endeavours to set before us is the palace of the happy and gay; the buildings he creates with his facile pencil are not the stronghold of a mediæval baron, the



battlemented tower which can resist the foe; his plans and elevations have the same character as his pictures. In executing them the polychrome decoration which Garnier introduced into Paris when he built the Opera would seem perfectly appropriate. On the whole, these attempts at architecture do Makart the greatest credit; they display the fertility of his genius in a new light and from an unexpected point of view, and it is quite intelligible that, with a sort of perversity which is not uncommon in men of versatile talent, he should be more ready to show his architectural sketches than his most famous pictures.

We must nevertheless go back to his pictures before closing this account of his work; for they are at once his glory and the basis of his fortune. Makart has just finished a series of twelve great paintings, half-ovals, intended to decorate the new museum which is shortly to be opened on the Boulevards at Vienna, opposite the Burg. The Government, in giving him this important commission, wished to recognise in a marked manner the merits of the favourite artist of the Vienna public, and to afford him an opportunity of doing justice to his genius, now fully matured, and asserting once for all his right to be famous. The way in which Makart threw himself into the grand task that had been set him showed very clearly his determination to prove equal to the hopes and intentions of his employers. He has, in fact, displayed to our gaze a graphic history of painting; he has composed a cycle of the heroes of the art, in which the greatest masters stand in the very light of glory, and so represented as to show at a glance the characteristics of each school, and to record the individuality of each master. Thus the long line of descent of the highest art is set before us, unbroken through succeeding periods, though its methods and inspiration have necessarily varied. We see it perennially young with the youth of immortality.

A mere series of portraits would obviously have been insufficient for such a scheme. Makart has represented the great painters each at work on that one of his pictures which has contributed chiefly to make his name famous. Thus we have a record of great works, as well as a gallery where the most illustrious men of whom art can boast stand and live before us with unforgettable reality.

The old German school is first represented by Albert Dürer, who is dressed with the strict simplicity of his rank and period. His face is full of expression as he paints a Virgin and Child; he is inspired by a true faith, and does not attempt to add the meretricious graces of rose and white to the lovely features of the Madonna. Physical beauty is not what he seeks to represent, but an ideal type, the offspring of his belief; and he paints it with vigorous simplicity. Dürer's pictures—familiar to every lover of art—are happily epitomised in this suggestive painting; and this is the more remarkable because Makart, to do it at all, must have divested himself completely, for the time, of his own modes of thought and methods of treatment.



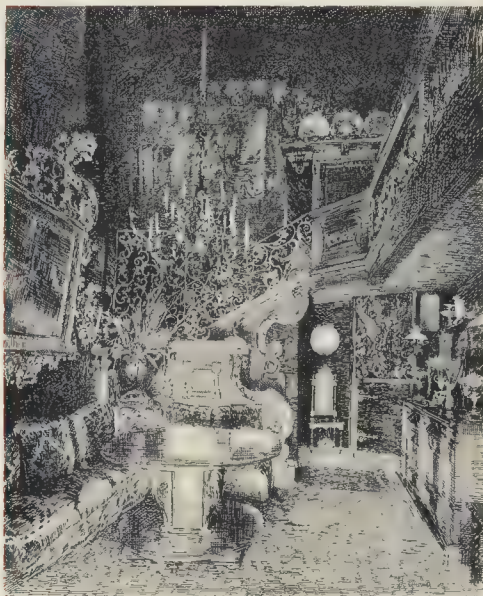
ROMEO AND JULIET.



What a contrast to this is the next picture, Titian! We are snatched from Germany, hardly escaped from medievalism, and flung into Venice. Titian, the very ancestor of all great colourists, the unflagging worker who lived through almost a century, and wielded the brush with undiminished vigour at the age of ninety, stands before us in all his energetic vitality. Makart has reproduced the splendour, the luminosity, the charm of his force and delicacy, the masterly power and variety, which have placed Titian so high in the hierarchy of Art. We can see with what reverence he has depicted the master he loves and fain would follow. In order to typify him by one of his best-known works, he has shown him employed in painting his *Venus*, lavishing all the resources of his palette and all the magic of his touch on her celestial beauty. The head of the painter is most successful; the expression is one of confident genius, of power sure of the result, of ever-present inspiration. This Venus is worthy to reign in Olympus. The radiant beauty of form and delicacy of modelling, the firmness of drawing,

and luxuriant wealth of colour, give us a perfect and complete idea of the great Venetian master.

The figure of Michael Angelo suddenly throws us into another set of ideas. He is indeed the giant of Art—the Titan who has scaled its highest peaks and not fallen before a thunderbolt. Michael Angelo is the man who has attacked Art on every side—painter, sculptor, architect in turn—and has taken the first rank in each. It was not an easy task to represent such a master worthily, but Makart has succeeded. With a perfect sense of fitness he has shown him at work on the creation, so to speak, of Adam. The great artist touches the marble with his finger, and the statue stands revealed—living, and fit to enter into Paradise. This grand work, familiar to all who have been to Rome, is represented in all its majesty. Michael Angelo himself is seen as we know him from contemporary portraits. He has the broad, high forehead of a great thinker, a flashing eye, a firm and vigorous pose. He is indeed the



THE DINING-ROOM

great master whose name impresses the ages. The picture is a triumph; no improvement seems possible.

Side by side with this towering genius, who raised Art to empyrean heights, we find the head of the Flemish school, with his facile inventiveness and inexhaustible fertility. Rubens—the diplomatist, the man of the world, the traveller, the hero of romance is here, and with him his wife, who is in fact the incarnation of his art and work. In her we see the massive form, the brilliant colouring, the sanguine vitality which characterise all the women he has painted in his numberless pictures. Makart perhaps felt the attraction of a certain affinity of genius, of tastes, and of instincts; at any rate no painter has, in our opinion, so admirably recalled the style of Rubens. The woman here shown us is in fact more grandly moulded, more palpitating, vigorous, and healthy than any we can find elsewhere. The very spirit of Rubens is embodied in her, and we understand it as soon as we see this picture.

Rembrandt and Velasquez are of a very different school. The more serious character of their work, the more sober and subtle tones of their colour, their very choice of subjects, made them less sympathetic to Makart.

However, he was resolved to do justice to the high position they occupy in the realm of art. The Dutch school is proud of Rembrandt, and he is one of those painters whose pictures, if not looked at too closely, are exceptionally powerful and impressive. He has been accused, and not without reason, of lacking grace and even taste. But then what force is in his expression, what harmony in his colouring! As to Velasquez, the head of the Franco-Spanish school, he has never been surpassed as a painter of nature, and he has imitated it so carefully that his pictures are almost illusory. These were two masters whom Makart might not overlook. At the same time he has marked the gulf that divides them from the great Italians; he has represented them as working on pictures of less importance, portraits intended to be placed over caryatides.

We find him, on the other hand, fired by enthusiasm and stirred to reverence and tender respect by the great painter of the Renaissance, the artist who first climbed the cloud-capped heights to the sunlit summits of



THE LARGER STUDIO

Art, the precursor of Michael Angelo and Titian. Leonardo da Vinci, the immortal painter of *The Last Supper*, that masterpiece now, alas! half ruined by the merciless assaults of time and men, was one of those indefatigable seekers who insist on knowing and investigating everything. He was as great in Science as in Art, and at the same time that he gave a new impulse to painting he was one of the most versatile inquirers of the age. It was his lot to introduce the worship of Art and a taste for beauty into the court of Francis I. of France; but, before that he had been, in Italy, the embodied spirit of the sixteenth century. Makart's predilection for this glorious innovator is evident, and in every respect a worthy one. We need only look with due attention at the picture he has represented him as painting. It is *La Joconda*, the famous portrait of Monna Lisa, the wife of Francesco Giocondo, at which he worked, so the story goes, for four years, wishing to make it absolutely perfect. And in fact a more exquisite portrait had never been traced by the hand of man; never had so bewitching a creature been represented with such consummate art; her mysteriously languid smile,



matchless delicacy of feature, and the throat and bust, so tenderly drawn and modelled. We see that Makart, like every painter, every critic, and every poet, had stood long and often, lost in dreams, before the *Monna Lisa*. He has reproduced it with a loving hand; and gratitude seems to have guided his brush to special care and pains in painting the portrait of Leonardo da Vinci himself.

With Holbein comes another vein of thought. A perfect knowledge of costume and infinite accuracy of detail are paramount here. We are reminded of the man who designed the great historical procession; we can fancy him choosing stuffs, hanging them and crumpling them to judge of their texture and effect, allowing no one but himself to decide as to their harmony and contrasts, and never leaving the smallest detail to chance. Holbein is sketching an English dame in an old German costume. Nothing could seem more simple or more appropriate to the old master's art; but the stamp of his own individuality that Makart has set on the costume is a revelation. We feel at once that to him this was the essential point of the picture. Holbein himself,



THE LITTLE STUDIO

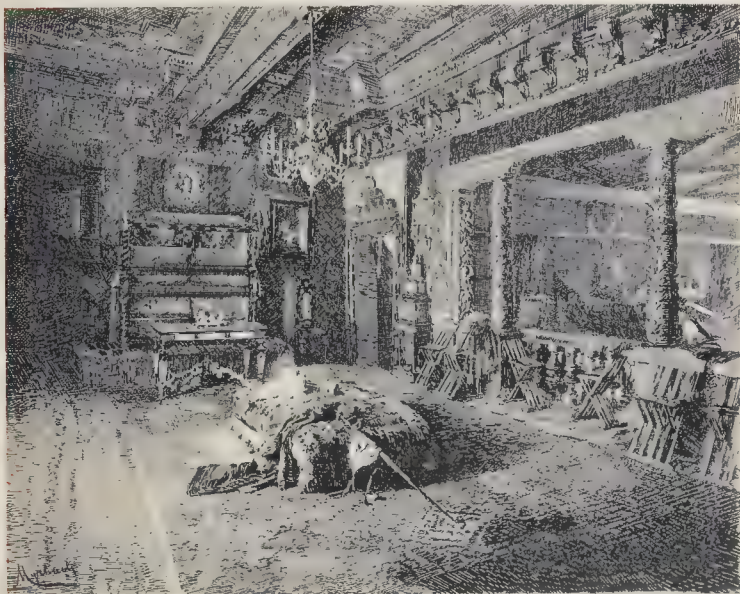
though the likeness is good, is insignificant by comparison with the work that the Viennese artist has shown him engaged in.

Our gaze is next irresistibly attracted by an angelic face, whose features are indelibly stamped on every memory. Raphael, with his refined features, his air of distinction, his expression of sweetness and fervour, stands before us the very embodiment of Art in its perfection. A happy youth, who knew nothing of life but its joys, whose every step led to success, on whom fortune was showered by the favour of princes, while his precocious genius won him glory—he died too young to know the bitter secret of disenchantment. Love threw a soft glow of happiness over his fame. He mastered, almost without labour, all the mysteries of colour, of form, and of expression. Each of his pictures is a masterpiece. And how truly divine are the types he has immortalised! How true in every detail, and how masterly as a whole! Every condition meets in his greater compositions to make them supremely and ideally perfect as works of art beyond which fancy is impotent to soar. The marvellous facility of his drawing, as precise as it is elegant; the skill with which the figures are grouped; the richness of the colour, as vivid as ever after the lapse of three centuries, all hold us spell-bound.



We understand the unswerving fidelity of posterity, which still hails the young painter of Urbino as the spirit incarnate of his Art. Finding no adequate terms in which to speak our admiration of such a master, we lovingly greet the image of his youth and beauty which can never fade from our memory. Michael Angelo—the Christian Phidias—was the solemn and high-souled painter of the Old Testament—of patriarchs, prophets, and sibyls. Raphael was the gentler historian of the gospel—of virgins and saints. The Loggie of the Vatican are perhaps his greatest work; but for the majority of the public his Madonnas are most inseparably associated with his name. Hence Makart has taken care to represent him as painting a Virgin of exquisite grace and innocence. With infinite zeal and patience he has competed, so to speak, with his own subject, and has really succeeded in giving us an excellent imitation.

As though with the express purpose of heightening by contrast this virginal dream of beauty, next to



THE DRAWING ROOM

Raphael we find Ribera, the representative of the Spanish school in its gloomiest and most sinister aspect. He is the last of the series. Ribera, who revelled in scenes of bloodshed, torture, and agony, loved to represent them with appalling realism; Makart has, perhaps, emphasized this a little too strongly, by depicting him as studying a corpse. Still, nothing else could so well have typified the character of his work, or of his very peculiar genius. The idea is perfectly clear, and forcibly rendered.

Two more pictures, more general in their scope, complete the cycle of twelve. The first is an allegory of Art under every aspect—Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture. Athens—which it might be supposed he had forgotten, since she finds no representative in the series of portraits—here has justice done her. Her fame is commemorated in the province of architecture. The second great composition shows us Fame deciding on the claims of sacred and secular Art. It is well conceived and treated with great taste; simple, well painted, and, as an allegory, intelligible at a glance.

This series sums up and completes in a comprehensive manner the life-work of Makart. He is to be seen

here as just what we might expect from his earlier pictures; his instincts and fine qualities are the same, but we see a remarkable improvement in the drawing. Very possibly, with regard to some of them, the same observations may be repeated as were made on the *Five Senses* and others of his pictures. The critics will say that the painter is too bold in his treatment of the nude. But, as M. Taine has very justly remarked, this coyness is purely modern, and we may therefore pass by this objection as unfounded.

To rest from the labour of painting the twelve great pictures of which we have given an account, Makart set to work to paint his wife's portrait, as Rubens had painted that of his wife. It was a labour of love, a delight to his eyes and his heart, to transfer to the canvas the features he admires and loves. The portrait was to be a poem, a fairy vision, full of the happiness which had surrounded its birth. Frau Makart is seated in a garden gay with flowers. Spring smiles down on her through the fresh verdure; the very sky is radiant in her honour; her favourite bird—a handsome parrot—sits on her hand. It is really like a magic vision that must vanish if we venture too near to it. The ideal is brought down to the level of the real. The likeness is perfect, but it is so poetically allied to an ingenious fancy that the work does honour alike to the artist and the husband.

We will here conclude this essay, and could find no better ending.

If now we had to sum up our whole opinion of Makart as a painter, we should say of him that he is the greatest colourist of the German school of the present day. Whatever blemishes may be found in his works, his gorgeous colouring is their salvation, and sets them on a level with those of the great masters of the Venetian school; nor can a painter, in such an age as ours, hope or wish for a higher place.

M. NEWLINSKI.



THE GARDEN

JAMES CLARKE HOOK, R.A.







THE BIRTHPLACE OF CUYP  
(Fac-simile of the Original Etching by the Artist.)

## JAMES CLARKE HOOK, R.A.



**I**F we take a train that goes south-westwards from London, and skims along the meadows of the river side and over the levels that of yore held the waters of the Thames, we enter on the pine-lands clad in almost architectural foliage, and we here and there compass spaces of splendid verdure. Next, a sandy district appears, with rolling plains of gravel and peat, dashed with pools that reflect the ever-changing grey, rainy, or blue and sunny skies. After these we pass the wide clay country, until the higher Surrey ridge is turned; and lastly, as we approach Farnham—a Saxon

town which might still be occupied by subjects of the king of Wessex, so full of life and yet so quiet does the place appear—the wild, heathy, many-tinted, broken moorland is attained.

Quitting the station at Farnham, and leaving the bishop's red-brick castle behind, a pair of swift strong horses bear us past innumerable hop-gardens draped with pendulous flowers, across sandy ridges crowned by belts of darkening pines, and athwart shallow valleys where streams babble in stony beds—streams dear to the angler and the lovers of Mr. Hook's Art—until, high up in the furzy, breezy, fir-scented country that seems half a chase or hunting land and is just as it was of yore, the horses run past banks of shining laurels and under boughs of ancient oaks and stalwart elms. Thence emerging between a lawn-like pasture and lofty belts of shrubs, we come finally to the entrance—which is a verandah as well as a doorway—of Silverbeck. Silverbeck is the mansion our artist built for himself, and called thus picturesquely as the namesake of a large brook—here in the moorland called a beck—which, dashing under sunlight and shadow, and ever talking to itself, long ago deepened its channel

to a valley, and hurrying by "silvery birches and pallid willows," and darker elms, and pines, and oaks, spread broadly in ponds that are the haunts of moorhens and margined in sedge, and then went forth upon the gravelly heath where many rushes whisper. On the bank of this brook stands the house at which we have arrived. This part of Surrey and the adjoining Hampshire is a land of ponds, gravelly moor, and rich green fields, and it is decked with clumps of old wood, outlying shaws and belts of timber, purlieus of that famous New Forest which has never known a plough.

As to Silverbeck, the house, which is the subject of one of the following engravings, is just such a one as an old English Franklin, had he been a man of culture, might have built of yore. It stands high, but is not lofty, and for convenience' sake consists of two floors only. It is belted about rather than enclosed by tall shrubs, not by bulky, air-excluding trees. This foliage gives privacy and something of dignity without the pretence of stateliness. More lofty trees stand aloof from the building, and enclose spaces of sward extending from the door. The verandah stretches along the front of the house and affords shadow to the lower floor; a wide-eaved roof



BRIMMING HOLLAND  
(Fac-simile of the Original Etching by the Artist).

protects the walls, and its shadow tells like a cornice. Weather-tiling, rich in many ruddy hues, and a steep roof of purple tint, give expression to the place. Comfort, not without dignity, and an ever-present serviceableness distinguish the exterior of Silverbeck, a house which is thoroughly characteristic of the master's life, and quite in keeping with the healthy motives of his Art. In all things solid, it is well-proportioned, genial, and sincere. Most of all it is made for living in, and everywhere a home. A second engraving gives an angle view in the garden. Within, a large, not lofty hall, panelled in oak, and having a billiard-table in the centre, opens from the verandah; a wide fireplace with a high carved mantel is on our left, and doors give access on the one hand to the living-rooms, on the other to the drawing-room. Another of the engravings shows the place. In the middle an easy-graded staircase of dark wood, with solid balusters, leads to upper rooms which open on a long corridor, and are so planned that they all look outwards on the landscape with little or no obstruction from the neighbouring buildings.

The furniture and fittings about us here indicate wealth and ever-present comfort, and a healthy joy in robust exercises. Something of that superfluity which accrues wherever ample means and high-toned tastes direct the accumulations of many years meets us at each turn. Excepting a few bulkier spoils of foreign travel, studies from ancient and sumptuously-coloured pictures, and implements of energetic exercises, everything on the walls is English, including drawings by friends of our painter and lovers of his Art, and etchings by his and other hands.



Among them are those idyls of the needle which Samuel Palmer gave his friend, as well as prints of high quality, choice of which was due to their intrinsic merits and noble aims rather than to their mere rareness or quaintness. The pictures are chosen scenes at home, or copies made from masterpieces of design, and chiefly of Venetian types in art. What has prompted this preference will be shortly seen. Otherwise Englishness prevails, and everything bears the impress of the master of the house, as well it may, for much of it was designed by the man whose robust and cultured preferences are distinct at every turn, from the door-fastenings of a primitive type to the cosy woollen blinds, which, to exclude the light, are made to run on rods across the windows, and are good drapery, not dust holding upholstery.

In this well-ordered and robust way Silverbeck itself and all its belongings were contrived by its owner, who, as his own architect, made the working drawings for the house: as his own carrier, drew the materials from far and near, choosing wisely and buying well; as his own builder, watched the construction, and worked with his own



A FISHERMAN'S GOOD NIGHT  
(Fac-simile of the Original Etching by the Artist)

hands. Planning the improvement of his estate, the artist devised a mill, and developed the resources of his land in apple-growing, draining, digging, building up, and pulling down. Heedful of the sanitary arrangements of what Chaucer would have called his "woning fair upon a heath," our painter devised the drainage and ventilation of this house. Brimming with energy, and devoted to the most wholesome modes of life, the master is sometimes to be seen at work as a woodman; then as a farmer, learned in the growth of crops; anon he will appear as a delver in his fields, or a gardener, hard at work with mattock, scythe, or spade.

Here, in the heart of Surrey, he can hold down the handles of a plough, or wield a flail, or work with a sickle as effectually as where, by the Cornish, Scotch, or Breton coast, he has been found, heedless of wet jackets and slippery rocks, heedless of the rolling sea, able to haul on to a rope, shoot a net, to pull at an oar, or stand at a tiller and control a suit of sails. Woodman, builder, swimmer, sailor, farmer, fisherman, the renowned Royal Academician has led a life of immeasurable activity, and failing in none of these capacities, has found happiness and health in all of them. So much, apart from Art, which is the staple of his exercises, for what he has done.

Bird-murder and other ways of thoughtless slaughter he has not done. Woe to the man who, in wantonness of sport, shoots God's creatures on the estate of Silverbeck. An ardent sea and brook fisher, mere fishing for the sake of death is no pastime of Hook's. He has "learned the wood-music without the gun." No creature in his service suffers avoidable pain. Eager-hearted, not austere, but impetuous in act and thought, the painter is one of

the most sympathetic of men. The western fishermen know him in his sea-gear, thick blue jersey, and boots, as intimately, and they regard him as kindly, as his country neighbours honour him in that suit of grey and brown homespun wearing which he met his friends at the door just a minute after those swift, strong horses of his brought them from Anglo-Saxon Farnham through sunny Churt to Silverbeck.

As the aspect of a man is, after all, very nearly a true "counterfeit presentment" of his inner life, and cannot be divorced from his doings in the world, it is incumbent on us to say how our host looked at home when clad loosely in a warm, half-brown, half-grey, thick and soft homespun jacket and knickerbockers to match. Stout shoes and stockings completed the costume, with an open collar which revealed a sinewy neck bearing a well-poised head still thickly covered with locks that are partly dashed with grey, and cluster compactly about a ruddy visage in which an almost Venetian tinge of inner gold reminds us of Titianesque carnations, and tells of a healthy life, a heart at ease, and of constant exposure to air and sunlight. This is he, who, if the giving of abundant delight be a source of happiness to men, must needs be one of the most richly blessed in this generation. Apart from all artistic and technical considerations, this has been pre-eminently Hook's good fortune. Thousands of townsmen, jaded of eye, of heart, of spirit, have, like myself, whom he now welcomes at Silverbeck, stood before his pictures and seemed to hear the far off sea grow louder day by day, and thanked him in their thoughts for those splendid previsions of the sunlight and the coast. A little above the middle height, his spare and wiry figure

is thin-flanked, broad-shouldered, and muscular, agile, firm-stepping, and quick in all his movements, the painter has a characteristic way of carrying his head erect when walking or actively engaged; but when study occupies his mind, the thought-laden face comes forward a little in its poise, and the eyes change their expression from a frank, eager, and resolute scrutiny to the look of



SEA URCHINS  
(a sketch of the Original Etching by the Artist).

one whose attention is turned inward while he considers points of difficulty and analyses the materials of a subject, picture, or what not. Keen sense of humour enlivens the eyes as occasion moves them, and no one takes more delight than Hook in a good story, or enunciates with more zest his convictions on Art, morals, politics, or the order of life.

A confirmed Liberal of advanced type, the artist is disposed to allow no mercy to claims which are not based on righteousness rather than on custom and convention. Devoted to his art and to nature, Mr. Hook is no mere painter, ignorant of men and books; but, on the contrary, his sympathies incline to old English lore and verse, with which he is more than ordinarily familiar. The studio or home workshop of such a man must needs be the centre of attraction for all who go to Silverbeck. Thence, when finished, proceed these pictures which were begun within hearing of the waves, or those other works which were studied by the silvery becks of Hampshire or the brimming rivers of Scotland. This studio, which is represented in two of the following engravings, is a large chamber adjoining the house, and accessible by means of passages as well as through a spacious conservatory which, when opened from within, extends the vista of the room, and is a great convenience to one who often needs to see his models from the distance, and master the effects of open-air and daylight.

Accordingly, the painting-room and its glazed adjunct can be thrown into one by pushing back the sliding-doors which divide them. The studio proper is, perhaps, forty feet long, twenty feet wide, and, to the ceiling, not less than fifteen feet high. Convenient side and end windows admit the light from any required direction, and are controlled by ingeniously arranged shutters and blinds. Around the walls of this large chamber stand two or three old English cabinets and other furniture of no great size. Above these pieces hang a few sketches and studies, leaving a very large

part of the wall-surface bare and coloured with a medium red which is neither bright nor dark, and absorbs rather than reflects

the light. At one extremity a large table receives odds and ends. A few rugs are on the floor, which is otherwise bare, because, like most artists who affect pure and brilliant colouring, and who are not portrait-painters, Mr. Hook dreads lest rising dust should spoil his pictures. Three or four easels of different sizes stand apart from each other, and are empty or loaded with pictures in varied stages of progress. About these easels is ample room and floor-space wide enough to walk about upon at ease. It will be seen that Mr. Hook's studio differs in most respects, except size, from that of Mr. Millais, which is a luxuriously appointed chamber, with lofty and stately doors, having carpets over all the floor, and enriched with couches and easy chairs for those who sit for their portraits. As the studios differ, so the mansion at Silverbeck differs from the great house lined with marble at Palace Gate.

The studios of Allan and Bryan—Mr. Hook's sons, both of whom are already known in Art—occupy portions of their father's house. On a ridge about a quarter of a mile from this building is another studio, the elevated situation and ample windows of which are available for that delineation of the sky which charms us all in the master's pictures; it is therefore called the "sky parlour."

Welcome and parley following it, soon introduced us to the largest studio thus described, and led us to the easels which, when I was lately at Silverbeck, sustained pictures that charmed everybody at the last Academy Exhibition. Three of them are among Mr. Hook's best works. The whole being the latest outcoming of his art, may well be noticed before I endeavour to set forth the history of the birth, education, professional training, and life-practice of their author.

The most energetic design is a coast-piece, called *Catching a Mermaid*, a title which contains a spice of homely quaintness in its humour that is commonly found in the catalogue of Mr. Hook's works. The picture gives to the life, and with abundance of the freshest nature, a sharp, quick summer morning breeze, urging boisterous waves into a nook of dark grey rocks in the foreground of the view. The wind turns their white crests over the bluish, opalescent bodies of these breakers, which are seething with air-bubbles and full of light. They rapidly follow one another landwards, and have borne forward the white figurehead of a wrecked ship, which a sturdy boy has secured with a boathook. His light footed sister has sped home for the line which, stooping, he secures about the prize, while, the end of the rope still encircling



A FEW MINUTES TO WAIT BEFORE TWELVE O'CLOCK  
(Fac-simile of the Original Etching by the Artist).



STREET IN SIENA  
(Study by the Artist, 1848).



her shoulder, she eagerly watches him, and keeps guard on the movements of a fidgety infant who is busier than his seniors. The glory of the picture is the sea, whose waves dash themselves against the points of rock, and "spooming," project high white fountains, which the wind sends in smoke-like drift over the land and water. Low promontories of brown, weed-covered rock enclose the bay, and two vast surges, with ever-changing surfaces and colours, charge between them. The dark green ocean is outside these points of land, and, being comparatively level, extends to the purplish band of vapour which hides the horizon; here and there bars of light and variously toned cloud-reflections are very distinct, while dashes of spray betray the hidden rocks. The lower atmosphere is of a pale turquoise colour; its higher spaces are partly veiled by semi-diaphanous strata of far-stretching ashy-tinted clouds, which are "like filmy creatures in the sea."

*The Wily Angler*, a Surrey piece, painted not far from Silverbeck, depicts, between verdant meadows, a stream

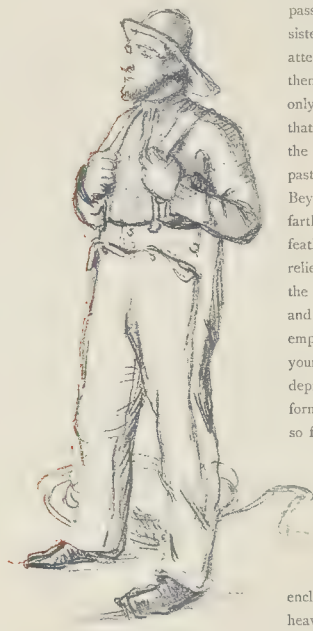
reflecting all the hues of the light and sky. In front, where the water passes the dark green stem of a prostrate oak, a boy is fishing, and his sister looks on. The vapours of the air are just dense enough to attenuate all the forms but to obscure none. These vapours make themselves visible in the bluish-grey of the shadows, and the shadows only, of those trees which close the prospect and meet the soft grey sky, that is full of the dreamy lustre of a calm autumnal day. The vista of the stream has all the charms of a peaceful landscape. Its waters slide past banks of ancient weeds and over shallows where the fish lie perdu. Beyond the meadows we catch a glimpse of a remoter reach, and farther onwards are serene upland spaces, and lines and groups of feathery trees which no breeze has shaken. The figures have been relieved with consummate skill against the surface of the water, so that the boy's black cap, brown coat, and blue shirt-sleeves, his ruddy face and solid bulk, supply the dominant elements of the whole, and are emphatic without being intrusive. The jocular, wholesome looks of the youngster are good in Art and true in nature. The third picture depicts once more the rich colouring, pure illumination, and rugged forms of that western English coast which the artist has so often and so felicitously delineated. *Love Lightens Toil* is a true illustration of a

Cornish sea-cove in calm weather, where white sands and their parterres of purple, olive, and green weeds, and black beds of mussels, show themselves through water that is as stainless and clear as the air, and made visible by an exquisite green local tint. Rocks of serpentine or slate defend the bases of the cliffs. A detached islet (Mullion Island) is

enclosed by a very narrow ring of froth, not foam, caused by the long heaving of the waveless surface, which chafes slowly, but does not break, about the rocks, and in this very motion tells us of enduring, far-spreading halcyon weather on the immeasurable seas. With such low

pulses and slow surges one cannot fail to know that even to the equator all is well. Standing on a sunlit headland, we mark the bluish shades between the bastions of the cliffs, and in the clear waters we see the projected shadows of the fishing-boats that lie at anchor on the surface and dash the sandy bottom with images of their hulls. On the rich bright sward in front sits a young mother playing with her baby, while behind her are long lines of purplish-brown nets drying in the sun among the white and yellow coast flowers, whose dry leaves shine like discs of metal. The local colour of this serene picture is marvellously rich, and faithful to nature. The pathos of the work is due to that sentiment of peace, safety, and repose which inspires every part of it, so as to form a harmony the charm of which is irresistible and complete.

The remaining work in the studio is called *Carting for Farmer Pengelly*, and exhibits a cove in a dark granite coast paved with dazzling white sand, on the levels of which the sunlight casts purple shadows. A group of lively youngsters attend a donkey-cart, and load it with seaweed for manure; their shadows are darker than



STUDY OF A FISHERMAN  
(Fac-simile from the Artist's Sketch-book).

themselves. They are followed by a boy who trails a hank of weed at his heels. The high and gloomy-tinted cliffs, whose angles seem to defy time and yet yield to the wind, which has sawn them in rectangular blocks, are crowned with vivid sward: their rugged peaks are sharply defined in tone, colour, and solidity against an atmosphere which, holding the thinnest haze, is saturated with sunlight. Beyond, are the blue firmament, and films of whitish vapour which quiver in the heated air. The sea in front steals over the sand, but does not hide its warm white colour, while tiny lustrous lines of water creep onwards with the tide, and, farther off, dark cerulean tints and belts of paler blue merge themselves in dun, dull amber, and purple bars and less defined tinges extending out of sight. Overhead the sky is charged with clouds. Waves break with sudden puffs of foam in the little inlets of the coast, and, slowly surging and resurging, rise and fall about the rocks.\*

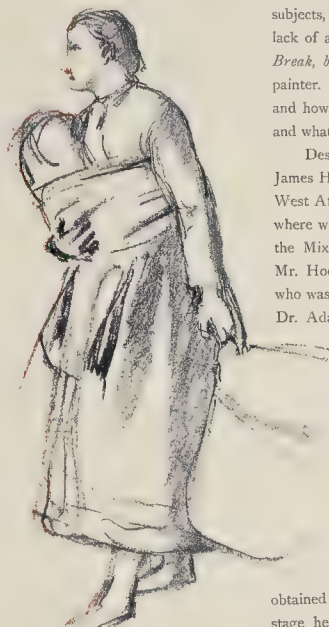
It will be seen that these pictures, all finished in one year, characterise very faithfully the present stage of

Mr. Hook's art and powers, which were never at a better pitch. The subjects, too, are fairly typical, and would be completely so but for the lack of an open sea-piece proper, such as *Luff, Boy!* or the beautiful *Break, break, break*, to remind us of all the themes and studies of the painter. Our next concern shall be who is he that produced such pictures, and how he came to paint thus, so that we can declare what opportunities and what exercises evoked this form of art and choice of subjects.

Descended from an old family settled at Wooler, in Northumberland, James Hook, the father of our painter, was a merchant engaged in the West African trade, and, as such, at one time resident at Sierra Leone, where with some distinction which clung to him in later life, he acted in the Mixed Commission Court as Judge Arbitrator. While in Africa Mr. Hook became closely acquainted with Mungo Park, the traveller, who was murdered in 1805. The judge married the second daughter of Dr. Adam Clarke, the famous commentator on the Bible, who lived at

Eastcote, near Pinner, in Middlesex, a place often visited by his grandson, who there or elsewhere came to the notice of "L. E. L.," the graceful poetess who, as Mrs. Maclean, lived not happily and died at Cape Coast Castle, another African station of the English, and connected in many ways with Sierra Leone. About the end of the second decade of this century Mr. James Hook and his wife were living in Northampton Square, Clerkenwell, London, where, on November 21, 1819, the future painter was born. In due time the North Islington Proprietary School, the most convenient good establishment of the sort in that region, received the boy, who

obtained nearly the whole of his education there. Even in this juvenile stage he was a constant and zealous draughtsman, winning the school prizes for drawing with ease beyond the wont of lads of his age. His father—a man of culture and unusually refined taste, so far from following



STUDY OF A FISHERWOMAN  
(Fac-simile from the Artist's Sketch-book)

the notions of that day, which almost tabooed the career of an artist, and professed to recognise in every would-be painter a pre-destined George Morland, with all his vices and troubles,—actively encouraged the youth in drawing and painting, and procured for him the acquaintance and counsel of several artists as to his future career. Among these, John Jackson, the brilliant portrait-painter and Royal Academician, was helpful in many ways. Jackson's daughter brought the young Hook to the knowledge of Constable, a genial adviser, upon whom the pupil was wont to wait in that house of his which yet remains in Charlotte Street,† Fitzroy Square. Constable lived for

\* The above descriptions, and some others following here, are adapted from notices published during many years in the *Athenaeum* and other journals, and are due to notes made before the works in question, which have been re-examined when the notices upon them were revised.

† This house ought to be marked by a tablet. The original number it bore was 35; this has been changed to 76. The building is on the east side of Charlotte Street, and the next but one southwards to North Street. Mr. J. J. Jenkins, the landscape painter, succeeded Constable in this house. Constable died there March 30, 1837.

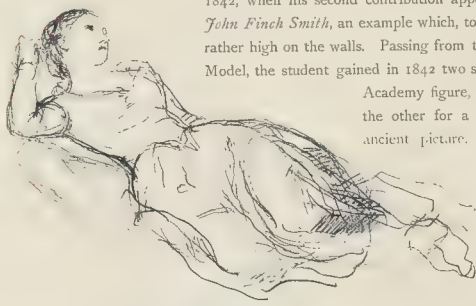
several years, about 1812, at what was then No. 63, Upper Charlotte Street. Constable, according to his wont with youths, warmly aided young Hook. Not less helpful were the brothers Chalon, one of whom deserved to be ranked with the best English landscape painters. Both designed and drew "the figure" with charming grace, and exercised a taste which, at that time at least, demanded the admiration of the student.

Quitting the establishment at Islington in 1834, the young Hook declined, probably because he disliked the restraints of a conventional mode of teaching, to enter the Art-school of Mr. Sass, which was at that period the most accustomed institution of the kind in London, and, without a master's constant supervision, set to work in the Sculpture Galleries of the British Museum, where, finding his best models in the Elgin Marbles, he studied them diligently and thoroughly, and gained from them not a little of that sense of style, that love for simplicity, largeness, and breadth in design, and that reliance on thoroughness of research which characterise the best Art of every age, and have marked even the less elaborate pictures of my subject from the first. Gaining a Probationership of the Royal Academy in the beginning of 1836, Hook was admitted a Student of that institution on the 7th of December in that year. Hilton was then Keeper of the Academy, and the chief teacher to whom the students looked for counsel. Several years before this date, Hilton, stricken by ill-health and broken by the disappointment of his hopes in life, had fallen into a valetudinary state, and was hardly equal to the duties of his office; nevertheless, he did not fail to notice the promise of young Hook, and, so far as he might, encouraged him. At this period Hook received three medals from the Society of Arts, which were awarded to him at the same time that Mr. Millais was similarly distinguished. While continuing his studies at the Academy, our painter produced a little picture of a dispirited girl studying a difficult lesson; it was called *The Hard Task*. With

it he made his début as an exhibitor in Trafalgar Square. This sufficed till 1842, when his second contribution appeared, its title being *Portrait of Master John Finch Smith*, an example which, to judge by its being No. 17, probably hung rather high on the walls. Passing from the Antique School to that of the Living Model, the student gained in 1842 two silver medals, one for a drawing from an

Academy figure, that is, a study of a naked male model; the other for a copy made in the Painting School of an ancient picture. At this period the artistic world of

England was stirred to the very depths by the contest to decorate the Houses of Parliament with historical and dramatic frescoes. The competition was announced in 1841; the conditions were stated in April, 1842; and all through the latter year, and until the memorable gathering of cartoons was opened in Westminster Hall in June, 1843, little else was talked



A STUDY  
Exhibited from the Artists' Sketch book, 1818

of by the ambitious students and painters of the day. Hook was among the competitors, and devoted time and energy to No. 38, which he described lately as "a chalk drawing of Satan in Paradise, called

"So started up in his own shape the Fiend!"

done while I was a Student at the R.A., and perhaps not worth mentioning." This cartoon must have afforded fine opportunities for maturing a style based, as we have seen, on the antique, and was worthy of a student not content with prettiness and commonplaces. The artist of twenty-three, who dared to "live laborious days" while executing this work in hopes of fame, had no ignoble future before him. The cartoon measured 10 feet by 7 feet 10 inches, and comprised three life-size figures. A contemporary and by no means too indulgent critic commended its well drawn figures and their good selection, adding, "Adam is too important." The making of this work is interesting as showing what the artist was about during a period of exceptional activity.\*

\* Among Mr. Hook's competitors on this memorable occasion were Messrs. Armitage, G. F. Watts, C. W. Cope, J. Z. Bell, H. F. Townshend, W. E. Frost, and Joseph Severn, all of whom obtained prizes. In addition to these we find recorded the names of Messrs. W. Riviere, father of the animal painter and R.A.; the most unhappy F. Dadd; W. F. Pickersgill, now Keeper of the Royal Academy; S. Hart; P. F. Poole; B. R. Haydon, T. Landseer; A. Geddes; H. Howard; H. O'Neil; A. E. Chalon, Hubert K. Browne ("Phiz"); R. N. Wornum (afterwards of the National Gallery); E. M. Ward; W. Cave Thomas; W. B. Scott; C. Lucy; J. C. Horsley; and David Scott. Other names of noteworthy men may not have been revealed in this competition of anonymous artists. The exhibition contained



The first picture of a class frequently represented by Mr. Hook's Art at this period was exhibited at the Academy in 1844, and with a subject borrowed from the Introduction to the "Decameron" of Boccaccio, was called *Pamphilus relating his Story*. In this year, thus attesting his activity, the artist contributed to the British Institution a pretty subject, of which the motto of Burns's verse was—

"Her voice is like the evening thrush  
That sings on Cessnock banks unseen,  
While his mate sits nestling in the bush.  
An' she's ta' glancin' spairin' een," &c.

This was a work of some pretensions. It measured 4 feet by 4 feet 8 inches. In the following year, 1845, still greater activity was manifest. The British Institution contained of Hook's, *Lorenzo and Jessica*, the moonlight scene in "The Merchant of Venice," and *Four Subjects from Rogers's Poem of "A Wish."* In the Royal Academy were *Portrait of A. Elmslie, Esq.* and *The Song of the Olden Time*. The latter attested the taste of the artist for romantic sentiment in design, and, as I am told, had not a little of the glowing colouring which distinguishes his later works.\* The most important achievement of this year was winning the Gold Medal of the Royal Academy for an original painting produced in competition, and representing a given subject. The incident chosen on this occasion, being *The Finding of the Body of Harold*, may have been prompted by the contests in Westminster Hall, where pictures of that event were rife. I believe an engraving was, at a later period, begun from this work, but I am doubtful if the plate was finished and impressions from it were published.

In 1846, Hook, turning for a moment to the history of ancient England, produced *The Controversy between Lady Jane Grey and Fakenham*, the subject of which was borrowed from "Fox's Book of Martyrs." The picture represented the discussion on transubstantiation



STUDY OF A LADY READING.  
(Engraving from the Artist's Sketch-book, 1846.)

between the priests and the condemned lady, and was exhibited at the Academy. In the same year (1846) the British Institution contained *Reading a Merry Tale: a Thought from England's Happy Days*. There was at this time a contest in the Academy for the Travelling Studentship, an endowment for sending successful competitors to Italy. This distinction, the Blue Ribbon of the schools, was won by Hook, the subject of his painting being *Rizpah Watching the dead Sons of Saul*. He exhibited this example at the British Institution in 1847; it measured 4 ft. 11 in. by 6 ft. 10 in., and had a design so bold and powerful that it fixed the eyes of observers on the painter. Thus far forward in the way of life, already distinguished in his profession, and all things beaming fair about his career, Mr. Hook married the third daughter of Mr. James Burton, a well-known solicitor—a lady who was herself a zealous student of several years' standing, and an artist of no inconsiderable skill, which, nevertheless, she does not now exercise. The Travelling Studentship and the wedding trip took effect in a journey to Italy, which included visits to Florence, Rome, and Venice. In this year, 1846, *Cottage Quizzing, a Sketch*, by our subject, was shown in the gallery of the Society of British Artists, his sole contribution to their exhibition.

one hundred and forty works, which occupied nearly the whole of the walls of Westminster Hall, and both sides of a screen extending down the middle. Thronged with visitors, this exhibition deserves memory not only because it was rich in good art and promises of more fine things, but because it was the first great gathering of the kind.

\* The motto was descriptive and suggestive of the design—

"They sang so sweete brought agayne the daies  
Of his love to Sir Rowland's mynde."

The period of Hook's travels in Italy was an unusually troubled and eventful one. All Europe was beginning to be moved by that fierce spasm which culminated in the so-called "scamper of kings" in 1848. At first not much disturbed by the impending storms, Hook spent a winter in Florence with his wife and some friends then sojourning there. He went to Rome, and afterwards to Venice. In these cities no one studied the old masters' pictures with more diligence than our painter of modern instances, seaside and rustic themes. In Florence he affected Fra Angelico, Ghirlandajo, and other painters of the Florentine school. In Rome he made some elaborate sketches from masterpieces by Michael Angelo and Raphael, omitting no observations which could strengthen his knowledge of style, and the dignified expression of the subject in Art. It was in Venice, however, as well as in the former territories of the Republic, that Hook discovered his technical mission and the models of his manner of painting. In the Venetian masters he found sunlight and colour after his own heart, perfection of expression, and that splendid illumination which, already predicated by his earliest works, has found glorious distinctness in a hundred English scenes.

In Venice still lived, so to say, Titian, Tintoret, Palma Vecchio, Bonifazio, and, with most vividness to our artist, Carpaccio and Mansueti. The last, "Bellini discipulus," as he called himself, reflected with vivacity the modes of life, habits of society, and dresses of the people of his time, whose ways and movements he, although struggling with some of the stiffness of a still nascent school, gave to the life with joy and vivid touches of character. These touches could not but be dear to one who, having imbued himself with the majesty and style of the antique and the Roman masters, had become familiar with the ordered culture of Florentine Art in the city of the Arno, who had brought to Italy a British disinclination for whatever was not free in thought, candid in expression, and vivacious in attitude and action. There is something of Italian grace and elegance of motion in the pictures of Mansueti which went well with the antique types our master had all along affected. The free delineations and dramatic motives of the works of Mansueti needed not much to be perfect in those charming pieces of historical *genre* of his which are in the Academy, as well as in the Church of San Giovanni at Venice, and at the Brera at Milan. Vittore Carpaccio, the better artist of the two old masters who thus most directly affected Hook, appealed to the Englishman's peculiar love of sunlight and bright colour, and, even more than Mansueti, touched with a sympathetic finger the ways, habits, and dresses, as well as not a little of the humour, of his day. Carpaccio, the ablest and most vivacious, the freest as well as one of the most agreeable and accomplished of the Bellinesque painters, may be seen to perfection in the Venetian Academy. His designs have some of the energy of Signorelli's, but none of that vehemence which marks the stronger nature of the great Tuscan. A *genre* painter to the core, he dealt with sunlight and pure brilliant colours with courage which had its reward in the sumptuous and gay harmonies of his pictures. Trained to paint in tempera, he, with no defect of impasto, brought into vogue great clearness of tone in light and shade, audacity in dealing with primary tints, and a marked preference for the straightforward representation of nature in buildings, dresses, and naive actions. He rejoiced in natural and simple expressions, and loyalty to the accidents of light and shadow. Everywhere realistic, but nowhere void of reverence, Carpaccio did not hesitate to delineate scriptural subjects with the figures and other types of Venetian life. A glowing, ruddy, somewhat adust and uniform tone in the carnations was produced by this noble and energetic Bellinesque by technical means not involving the use of semi-opaque tints as in Hook's pictures; and in the sharp definition of forms and tints in his works we recognise the influence of tempera practice on the artist, who, in other respects, reminds us constantly of the radiant, fertile Bellini. With the resources of a larger mode at hand, the Englishman failed not to deal with colour in bright under-work and pure opaque colouring. Nevertheless, bright, rich red dresses, vivid verdure, deep cerulean seas, and even the masses of emphatic black which are affected by our countryman, were in a tentative way employed by turns before he went to Italy. These elements were systematically disposed and felicitously developed on a fair scale in pictures which gained strength while the painter grew in knowledge of



STUDY FOR "WHO IS STIVIA?"  
(Fac-simile from the Artist's Sketch-book).

Titian and the great Venetians. The golden inner tints, rich clear reds, the even brownness of sunburnt skins, and the masses of dark brownish-black hair which we recognise in Hook, are, in fact, as Venetian as Venice herself could have made them. The grace of genre, the sweet poetic and fine pathetic incidents, and touches of home life and humour which are now, and have been, since 1854, the staple of Hook's order of design, are Venetian, but founded on himself in the first period of his career.

Intermediately, and in the choice of their subjects manifestly affected by the Venetian sojourn of their author, we had a group of pictures from Hook which indicated taste for the drama (not the stage), exercised in modes of design which were more or less fashionable. The fact is the English school, deeply affected by the splendid success of Bonington, and the vigour of Delacroix's painting and dramatic conceptions, had delivered itself of much conventionality, and sought freedom in romantic subjects and types in Art which, although indirectly, reflected Venice. Gilbert Stuart Newton, one of the best-esteemed lights of English painting at that time, contrived to unite something of the daintiness of Watteau and the larger, romantic manner of Bonington. A student must needs paint in the mode of his day ere he takes a path of his own. Accordingly, Hook's earlier practice was a development of that mode which his contemporaries, Maclise, Ward, Egg, and Geddes, were strong in. As the thing grew into wider and wider vogue it was, of course, vulgarised, and soon became threadbare.

Several years passed while the better, generally graceful, and fortunate stage of this taste prevailed. Mr. Hook's pictures appeared at the Academy, and secured considerable increase of his reputation. Residence in Italy, and for the most part at Venice, suggested the choice of the subject, not less than the fresh and graceful treatment, of *Bassanio commenting on the Caskets*, the production of 1847. The next illustration was No. 455 in the Academy Exhibition of 1848. The picture represented the arrival of the Emperor Otho IV. in Florence, when the beautiful ladies of the city assembled in his honour, and he selected as the most beautiful among them the maid Gualdrada. The damsel's father prompted the Emperor to kiss her lips, but she declared that no man but her husband should do so. On this Otho praised the damsel, and Count Guido fell in love with her high spirit and married her. Affording opportunities for the display of dramatic expression, contrasts of character, and charming faces, as well as of bright-coloured draperies, armour, and picturesque architecture, this picture was a capital example of the class. Both these works were painted in Italy.

About the end of the year 1847 Italian political affairs were threatening a crisis, which, however, did not take effect until some months later, when in March, 1848, the Venetians joined the revolutionary movement of their neighbours in Northern Italy, then ably promoted by Sardinia and grimly confronted by Austria. A Liberal to the heart, and on every ground deeply interested in the cause of Italian liberty, Hook,

who was then living in Venice, could not be expected to remain an uninterested spectator of the events which followed the action of the citizens and Manin, their last Doge. He witnessed the struggles of the people with their masters, and, it is said, took a part in one of the revolutionary movements, and was one of those who in a tumult helped to pull down the Austrian Eagle from the church of San Marco. This action might well account for the abrupt departure, not to say flight, of our painter from Venice. With all his belongings he escaped arrest by embarking in a small trading schooner which left the port at that time. Hook was present in Venice during the blockade of the Casernes by the Italians, and the bombardment which followed, after which



STUDY OF A PRIEST. ROME  
(Fac-simile from the Artist's Sketch-book, 1848).



the Austrians departed. After a long and very stormy passage he reached Gibraltar, and thence journeyed home again. During his stay in Italy Hook had made a very considerable number of sketches and studies in oil from famous pictures of all the already-named schools. These works are now in the studios and on the walls of Silverbeck, being among those characteristic decorations to which I have previously alluded. Rather less than two years' sojourn in Italy convinced our painter that he, at that time at least, could expect no more benefit from a longer stay. He had, therefore, when the troubles began already resigned the remnant of his Travelling Studentship, and was preparing to return home.

Several subjects from Italian history and drama were projected before Hook's departure from Venice. The completed pictures of this class were, at the Royal Academy, as follows: in 1849, *The Chevalier Bayard wounded at Brescia*—

one of his most beautiful pictures—*Othello's first Suspicions*, and *The Flight of Bianca Capello*. In this year he painted a picture of great charm—the gracefully-composed figures of a lady and her lover seated at a table, and brilliantly coloured, a subject from “Anne of Gierstein,” which, having been engraved about 1850 as an illustration to the library edition of the works of Sir Walter Scott, is now in the possession of Mr. T. Oldham Barlow, R.A., the eminent engraver, one of the painter's oldest friends. In this year appeared at the British Institution a small picture by Hook, called *Venice*, 1550, with the motto—

“When they did please to play the thieves for wives.”

*The Departure of the Chevalier Bayard from Brescia* was at the last-named exhibition in 1850. A work similar in subject now belongs to Mr. R. Brockelbank, of Childwall Hall, Liverpool. It shows two fair damsels presenting to the knight certain gifts they had prepared during his illness. 1856 produced *Francesco Novello da Carrara and the Lady Taddea escaping from the Emissaries of G. Visconti, who are in pursuit of them*, and *A Dream of Venice*.\* These pictures had secured Hook's election as an Associate of the Royal Academy, which was the event of the year. *The Rescue of the Brides of Venice*, a sumptuous piece of energetic design and bright coloration, attested the wisdom of that election when, in 1851, with a less important work, called *The Defeat of Shylock*, it was exhibited in Trafalgar Square. The pictures of 1852 showed continued searching of the same veins in Art and thought. They were *Othello's Description of Desdemona*, and *Signor Torello appears at the Marriage*—an illustration of a story of Boccaccio's, representing a husband, believed to be dead, attending his wife's re-marriage, and making himself known by dropping his signet in a pledge-cup. This work was at the International Exhibition, 1862. *The Chevalier Bayard knighting the infant Son of the Duke of Bourbon* (which was at the Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1855) and *Queen Isabella of Castile with her Daughters visiting Nunneries*, were at the Academy in 1852. In the same year *Olivia and Viola* was at the British Institution.



Sketch  
1850

STUDY OF TOWER. N.Y.

These pictures are of interest to us, because they concluded the Italian group of the painter's works. After them a memorable departure was made from the style they illustrated, and the artist, reverting to his old choice of rustic subjects, combined the fruit of Venetian studies, as before described, with English themes and English

\* This work comprises ladies and musicians in a gondola. It was at the Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1855.



STUDY OF DORT, 1869.

light, air, and homeliness while he was displaying pastorals, and, from a year or two later, idyls of the sea and rocks. When the Academy Exhibition of 1854 was opened, all the world was taken by surprise, and the charms of Hook's pictures afforded all of us a new delight. The first of these was *A Rest by the Wayside*, a pastoral of sweet life, light, and colour. *A few Minutes to wait before Twelve o'clock* came next, and represented a



STUDY OF DORT, 1874

buxom country wife seated in sunlight on a grassy slope, waiting with her husband's dinner till the noon rest arrived. Meanwhile, she fondles her lively infant, whose delight is *riant* as his face is radiant. A sketch of it is already before the reader. Mr. Hook made a lovely etching of this design, which is important as one of the first of his works in that mode, and is as full of sunlight and colour as black and white can be. The third picture of this year was a transitional example, standing in style between the splendour and full tones and colouring of the later phase and the

earlier Venetian mode. The subject was French, and the picture was called *The Time of the Persecution of the Christian Reformers in Paris, A.D. 1559*. The subject is a street scene, with, in quaint costumes, numerous figures singing perforce or threatening violence. 1855 produced (1) *Market Morning*, a cottage scene; (2) *A Fracture*, a small example representing the painter's son, Allan, then a little child, seated with a toy; and (3) the fresh English figure in a glowing, somewhat slightly-painted landscape, called "*Colin, thou kenst the southerne Shepheard's Boye*,"\* the deep-toned, richly-coloured, lush green herbage-clad scene of the beautiful pastoral named *The Birthplace of the Streamlet*; and (4) *The Gratitude of the Mother of Moses for the Safety of her Child*. In the latter the mother receives the injunctions of Pharaoh's daughter, "Take this child away, nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages." Mr. Ruskin characteristically noticed among the fine elements of this design the original and touching pathos of "the little Miriam trotting by her mother's side with her rough harp and pitcher hung by it, looking back, in her childish wisdom and fears, to see that the princess is not watching the burst of passion which might betray her mother." This was another transitional work, indicating something of the old strain, with much more of the new, and especially wealthy in fruits of Italian studies.

Thenceforward the same potent Venetian mode, in combination with English pastoral and marine incidents, continued to be employed by our artist. Having thus traced the development of his Art, and noted the main facts of his studies and career, it has become needless to say more about these matters. Let me, therefore, confine future remarks to the subjects, qualities, and charms of his works. The pictures of 1856 were (1) *The Brambles in the Way*, a Surrey lane with figures traversing it; (2) *A Passing Cloud*, a picture which was one of the Manchester Art-Treasures in 1857, and represents a pair of lovers in the agonies of a tiff; (3) *Welcome, bonny Boat!* a fisherman's return home, which was likewise at Manchester; and (4) *The Fisherman's Good-night*, the converse subject to that of the last-named work. The scene is Clovelly, with the little pier foreshortened from the front and centre of the picture; a pile rises high on our left, the sea-ladder is on the other side. A fisherman is parting with his wife

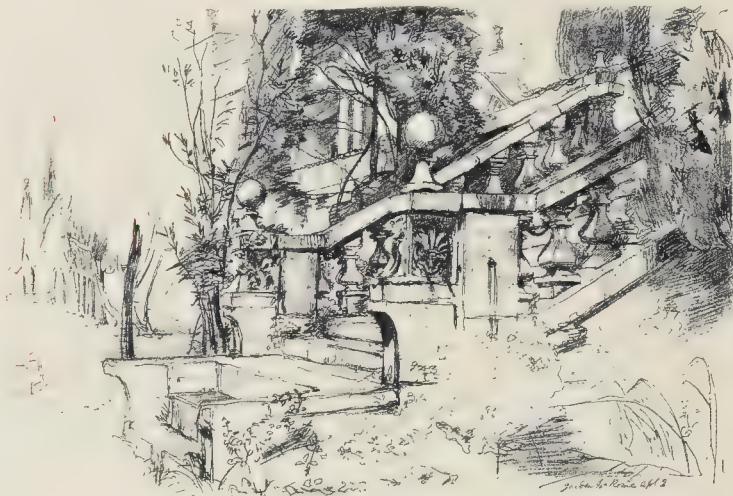


STUDY OF IONA, 1879

\* This little gem was etched by Mr. Hook, and published, with other works, by the Art Union of London. *A Fracture* is still at Silverbeck.

and child, while just descending the ladder; his right leg is straight, and his left knee rests on the parapet. Delicious sunlight saturates the sea and sky; the purple shadows of the cliffs, receding in the distance, the shining opalescent grey-blue, pallid green, turquoise, sapphire, and emerald tinges of the sea, are exquisite. Not less fine in their way are the wealth of green on the land, the cool, infinitely various tints of the stonework, and the solidity of the flesh and dresses. Mr. Hook made an etching of this picture, which is nearly as fine in tone as the original, and one of the masterpieces of the art of reproducing the effects of intense colour in black and white. An engraving of the design is before the reader. "Both sea and cliff are painted," said Mr. Hamerton, speaking of the etching, "with all the artist's habitual wealth of colour, and it needs but little imagination to supply the very hues themselves." This was said with a double application to the last and to the fellow-etching made by our artist, from *The Coast-boy gathering Eggs*, the masterpiece of 1858.

In the Academy of 1857 it was said Mr. Hook had outdone himself. *A Signal on the Horizon* calls a pilot from his look-out station near a cottage built against a cliff, whence he is sighting a signal from a homeward-bound ship; his hardy, clear-eyed son waits but the order to join him in their boat and proceed to her. Other figures of



A GARDEN NEAR ROME  
(Fac-simile from the Artist's Sketch-book, 1848).

men, women, and children enrich the scene with homely and wholesome beauty, rich deep tones, and sumptuous tints. Far below the tide breaks sharply on the shingle, and on the green sea there is a fresh breeze which might lift one's hair. The place is Clovelly, where the artist had been staying long ere crowds of sketchers had hackneyed even that supremely beautiful nook. The pathos of *A Widow's Son going to Sea* has remained in the hearts of many men and women. Simple as was its motive, and plain as were its suggestions, it had on me a like effect to that of the Laureate's verse—

"God help me! save I take my part  
Of danger in the roaring sea,  
A devil rises in my heart  
Far worse than any death to me."

The proper motto of this painting was equally explicit—

"Sail forth into the sea, O Ship!  
Through wind and wave, right onward steer,  
The moistened eye, the trembling lip  
Are not the signs of doubt or fear."



The boy has just parted from his mother, and by a rope is lowering himself from a pier into a boat in which to leave. His face is partly hidden from her, but we see signs of resolution dashed with manly grief upon it. The artist made a point by the introduction of a child swimming a toy boat in the green waters of the creek, whose deep-toned surface reflects the darker hues of the lofty shore. Behind the main group a figure is seen at the head of the pier in the act of checking the way of a small vessel near the mouth of the harbour. *The Ship-boy's Letter* reversed the point of view. A letter has reached his inland home, where the sun lies broad and brilliantly on meadows and trees of the most sumptuous verdure and densest foliage. A sturdy labourer listens to his wife, who reads the missive with out-looking eyes, as if the simple detail brought before him, instead of those green fields, wide rolling waters; and, instead of those wind-shaken trees, the ever-swinging masts of a lofty ship. Her face—indeed, all the faces, all the actions, all the colour in each of these pictures, are perfect and delightful. In colour they are masterly studies, for the artist evinced his knowledge of the great secret of that quality—intense variety, and a system of counterbalances; the green trees are intensely various greens, as in nature, and chromatic echoes occur throughout, producing harmony even where contrasts are resorted to.



SILVERBECK, FROM THE ROAD

Mr. Ruskin wrote of this work, "The whole heart of rural England is in it, as of sailor England in the other, i.e. the *Signal on the Horizon*." *The Ship-boy's Letter* belongs to Mr. Matthews.

A grand year in the life of Mr. Hook was 1858, when he carried off laurels from the Academy with three transcendent works: No. 332, with the motto from Proverbs xvii. 6, *Children's children are the crown of old men, and the glory of children are their fathers*—a field labourer playing with his child, tossing up the delighted urchin, while the mother looks on maternally enraptured, and the grandsire snaps his fingers at the little one. The locality is English, fresh, peaceful, and happy as ever lay beneath an English sky. Something glorious in truth and brilliancy there is about this work, whether in the expressions of the faces or the exquisite colour in the background. The masterpiece of the year was, however, *A Coast-boy gathering Eggs*, of which our memories retain impressions, strengthened, no doubt, by means of the noble etching named above—the best of Mr. Hook's productions in that way. In sunny weather, the halcyon movement and brilliancy of which contrasts with the "dreadful trade" he pursues, a boy is let down before the face of a Lundy Island cliff by a rope, and he holds a net at the end of a rod to receive the spoils of his cruel business, some of which have been lodged in a nook near at hand. Angry and screaming gulls, fearful of making too near an approach to the

invader, sweep on wide wings below his perilous perch, and their flight in mid-air suggests to the shuddering spectator the altitude of their enemy's standpoint. A hundred yards below the boy's feet, which spread out and unconsciously feel the air for a step, as it were, lies the sea, in the deepest of its summer jewellery; to the very horizon goes a constant creeping and smiling ripple, such as Homer knew so well, and the white-crested wavelets tumble in the sunlight, while breaking on the cliff's foot they make a silver fringe of foam. As before, the colour of this painting is admirable for its vividness, harmony, and intense variety; the infinitely varied blue-green of the sea, concentrated on and subdued by the more powerful blue of the boy's jacket, and repeated all about by the lichens and other growths, wonderfully varied, and subtle as they are, point the picture out as an example of what a painter may achieve if, with learning such as Mr. Hook has mastered, he refers to nature for its application—not to nature without learning, nor to learning without nature. *A Pastoral*, associated with Spenser's *Hobbinol*, and a comparatively unimportant example embodying an exquisite idea, was exhibited in this year. It showed shepherds leading homewards their flocks while blowing pipes before them, and a woman at the front closing a

gate lest they pass the wrong way.

The figures of the country louts were wholly British and pastoral; the background contained such painting of sunlight, of trees, of fields, of sky, "hedgerow and elm, and every English sign," that one might descant on them for hours.

The productions shown in 1859 were four in number, and comprised two delightful works which the artist has never surpassed. They were No. 250, an illustration of Tennyson's *The Brook*:—

"And out again I curve and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever."

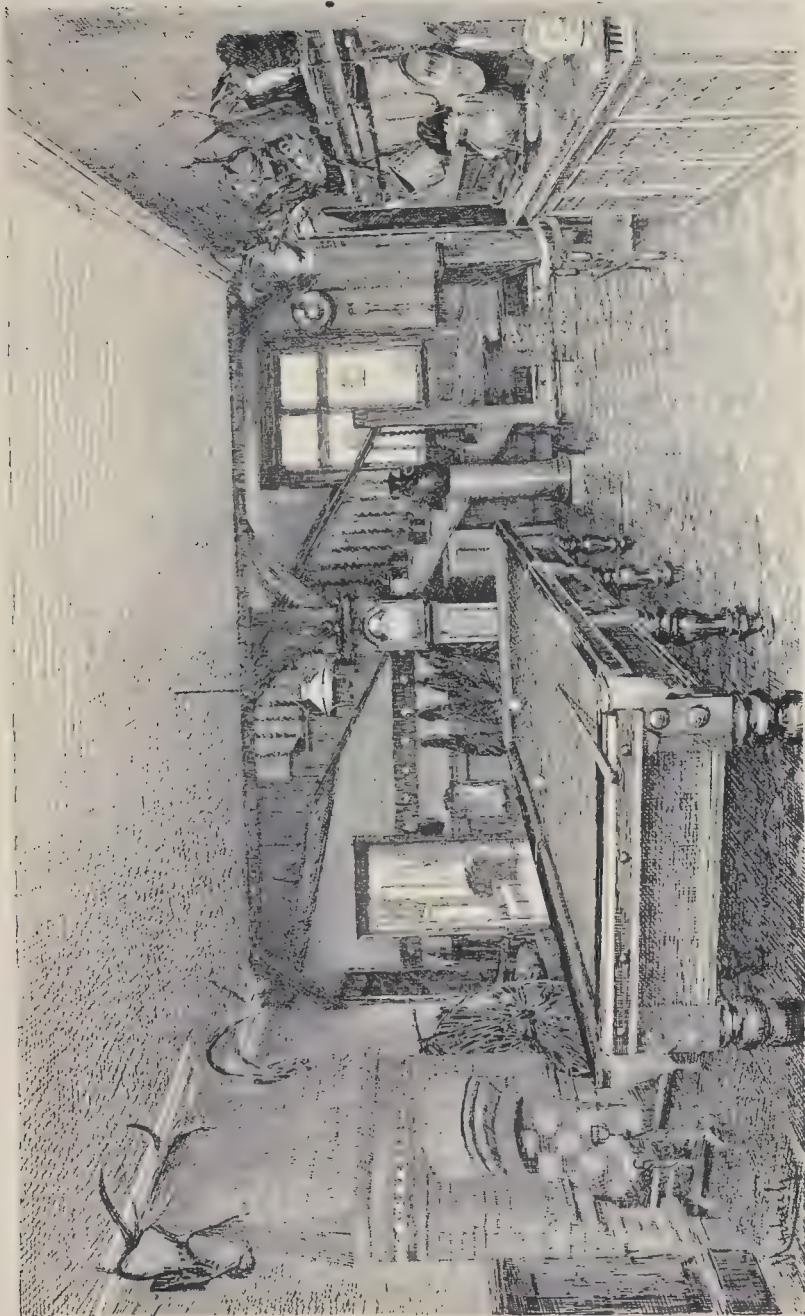
A cart with an old man and a young man in it is entering the shallow stream, which is spanned above by a rustic bridge; over this a young woman passes, caressing a baby, while leaning on the handrail of the bridge a country boy is talking to the



THE GARDEN ENTRANCE.

young man in the cart. Behind, the delighted eye of the spectator roams into the glowing verdurous depths and bars of light and clear shadow, all admirably painted. The lilac gown and red kerchief of the woman are Carpaccio-like elements of colour vigorously suiting the dark green and blue. The "moral" of the design is distinct enough, and could not but give gravity to the significance of these earthly shows of beauty which, although "men may go," are for ever renewed to bless countless generations of mankind. This work was at the International Exhibition, 1862. *A Cornish Gift* embodied, so far as the mere subject went, a simple jest. Pictorially, it was a triumph even among the artist's works. A fisherman's boat returning from sea meets another boat going out, with a pretty girl and a young man in it. From the former boat a youth leans over to present a lobster, all blue and alive, full of wrath, to the fingers of the girl, who, half in fun and half in fear, draws back from the grim outstretched claws. This picture was re-exhibited at Leeds in 1868. The *Skipper Ashore*, a lovely little study in comparatively low tones and equable glass-green tints, shows a fisher-boy lying in a black boat, with one foot over the gunwale, rocking himself and idly dabbling with the water. Venice never surpassed





THE HALL AT SHAFER'S





the fine delicate breadth and subtle tinting of this lovely piece. Here black played an unusually important part in the chromatic scheme. Few painters know so well as Hook how to deal with black.

The great picture of this year was *Luff, Boy!* of the brilliancy, energy, and wealth of which a mezzotint affords imperfect suggestions. Where the sky is swept clear by a summer breeze, and far-off turmoil lifts the surface of the sea, we have the interior of a black Cornish fishing-boat, almost a cockle-shell, that all as one with its burthen of brilliant, innumerable tinted fish, a dark sail, and its crew, rises on the back of a wave. An old man, who has the sheet of the sail in hand, gives the order to bring the boat's head up to the wind to a little boy of ten years old—his grandson, apparently—who faces us with sunny eyes, ruddy carnations, and brown hair, through which, in defect of a cap, the wind goes swiftly. This youngster, with the tiller in both his chubby hands, pushes it over promptly, and looks eagerly and steadfastly forward. A third person, an older boy, whose dark-blue jersey makes exquisite colour with the sunlit sail, which is tawny where the lustre falls purple in the shadow, the black boat, and the darkest emerald sea—sits on a thwart of the boat as, rising, she cuts the wave.



THE STUDIO (WEST).

The edges of the water glitter as they move; flecks of foam, trailed on the sea, and shadows projected into its depths, define the contour of the surface.

Mr. Ruskin, passionately affected by this picture, wrote thus of *Luff, Boy!* After referring to the rumours of war which then pervaded the political atmosphere, and pointed to "enemies, foreign or internal, French, Slavonic, or demoniac," the eloquent "Graduate of Oxford" demanded, "What arms have we to count upon?" and answered himself thus: "If our enemies want to judge of our proved weapons and armour, let them come and look here. Bare head, bare fist, bare foot, and blue jacket. If these will not save us nothing will. A glorious picture—most glorious. 'Hempen bridle, and horse of tree.' Nay, rather, backs of the blue horses, foam-fetlocked, rearing beside as we ride, tossing their tameless crests, with deep-drawn thunder in their overtaking tread. I wonder if Mr. Hook, when he drew that boy, thought of the Elgin Marbles—the helmetless, unsworded, unarmoured men of Marathon. I think not: the likeness is too lovely to be conscious; it is all the more touching. They also, the men of Marathon, horsemen riding upon horses, given them of the sea-god. The

earth struck by the trident takes such a shape—a white wave, with its foaming mane and its crested head, made living for them. And the quiet steersman, too, with his young brow knit, to whom father and brother are trusted—and more than they. I would we had such faithful arms, however feeble, at all helms."

How much Mr. Hook, "when he drew that boy thought of the Elgin Marbles," I have long ago suggested, and, although there is no conceivable connection between the figures of the Parthenon, in their "helmetless, unsworded, unarmoured condition," and the "men of Marathon," so far as this picture is concerned, the potency of the picture undoubtedly evoked this dithyrambic criticism, and deserved the applause it so picturesquely implied. *Luff, Boy!* was one of the greatest attractions of the International Exhibition of 1862, belonging to Mr. Steuart Hodgson. In 1862, Mr. Hook was elected a Royal Academician, by, I believe, an unanimous vote. This is the culmination of his official honours, so far as England is concerned.

The pictures of 1860 were four in number. The legions who delighted in *Luff, Boy!* hailed with fresh pleasure *Stand Clear!* as almost its equal. A fishing-boat is just coming to the beach—seems taking her last leap in the waves before grounding; one wave arches out before the stem, to break on the shingle. A boy casts a rope to those who are supposed to stand on the shore; and it describes great curves and rings in flying forth. A second boy sits on the gunwale, bare-legged and ready to drop into the water the moment she touches the beach. The fisherman stands behind, furling the spritsail. The levels of the sea shine beyond, painted with that felicity which ever accompanies the artist's handiwork. A smaller picture has for title *Those whose Bread is on the Waters*, another subject from a fisher's life. A man and his boy are seen in a row-boat, upon a sea that is just getting to be uneasy, and breaks in short waves of deep green. They are hauling in a net, that comes heavily to hand. The boat yields to their efforts, and the gunwale lays nigh the water. It is almost superfluous to say how fine these works are in colour and tone. The richness and subtlety of the former quality will be observed in both the above instances, not only in the disposition of the opaque masses of the men's dresses and the boats, but in the artful gradations of the sea-tints, which offer endless delight to all lovers of the subtlest quality of painting. For tone which combines both colour and texture, and is something beyond them, commend us to the way in which the boats tell against the water, the varying power of the dresses, and lastly, the manner of showing the mast and the sail, in the first picture, against the sky. What luminousness dwells in that sky—filled with light and mist to its utmost visible verge! It is softly radiant, like the atmosphere of a northern climate—a sky that sleeps not in a grand dream of lazy beauty, but lifts veil beyond veil of tender haze, and rolls delicate, scarce-visible screens of diaphanous vapour between the eye and the source of light. Not to quit his old love of landscape painting, the artist sent to the Academy a genuine English study of Surrey scenery, *The Valley on the Moor*, a scrubby piece of half-naked gravel-land, bright with fresh green and water; although a little too positive in colour, this was nevertheless very beautiful and charmingly English. His *tour de force* of the season was a poem in perfect painting, almost equal to that real lyric of the Laureate's which supplies its theme—the well-known and exquisite *Break, break, break*,

"O well for the fisherman's boy,  
That he shouts with his sister at play!  
O well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat on the bay!"

is the text thus commented on. The picture has preserved for ever one of those hazy, autumn days, when a mist half absorbs the land, screening its details, and bringing out its masses in large, grand, and uncertain gloom—gloom, not of darkness but of light withheld, the negation of sunlight only. The sea, whose shining levels spread through the bay before us guarded by its horns of lofty cliff, seems sleeping in the arms of the dying year, with such depth of repose that its inspirations are only to be seen in the dreamy heavings that pulse slowly from shore to shore. Sleeping thus, and filled with light—indeed, saturated with light—the ocean is; and about its repose in this opaline splendour there seems to hang a melancholy monotone, like the air of a pathetic piece of music, recalling most aptly and subtly when we hear Tennyson's lyric sung by a veiled voice. Floating on this summer sea is a boat, and in it a sailor lad sits singing; a girl, his sister, leans back upon the thwarts, dipping her arm elbow-deep in the warm waves. Behind a point of rock in the mid-distance, but yet far removed, glimmer the white sails of a ship, as she slowly drifts away from sight. It is impossible to describe the poetical suggestiveness of this picture; let me, therefore, confine myself to the execution, whereof it is pleasant to observe the way in which a distinction is made in the fresh sharpness of the figures in the first two mentioned works with



the soft and delicate uncertainty of their handling of this one. But for faithful rendering and subtle management of colour, let the misty cliffs of the last be studied in their infinite variety of tint as well as the complete subordination in which they are kept as regards tone.

In this year Mr. Hook undoubtedly attained the level of technical power, invention, and professional distinction, which is manifest in the pictures of the present time not less than in those we found on the easels at Silverbeck. It is needless, therefore, to continue at large the exposition of his masterpieces. I have selected these instances because it would take a volume to exhaust the charm, either pathetic or technical, of Mr. Hook's Art. His etchings alone, some of which I have indicated, demand an extended notice.

The following works have been exhibited since 1860. During the period to which the latter groups of paintings are due the artist made excursions from England in many directions, and abroad found capital subjects for his Art. Accordingly, we find Scilly in *Compass'd by the inviolate Sea*, *The Trawlers*, and the splendid



THE STUDIO (EAST).

*From under the Sea*. We note a sojourn in Brittany by means of *Breton Fishermen's Wives*, *The Mackerel Take*, and *The Sardine Fleet*. Hook was in Banffshire while painting *The Herring Fleet*, *Fishers clearing their Nets*, and *Mother Carey's Chickens*. The North Sea and Holland furnished the themes of *Fish from the Dogger-bank*, *Land of Cuyt*, and *Brimming Holland*. Norway was visited in 1870, and her *Salmon Trappers*, *Haymakers*, and *Market Girls* had due delineation in the following year. Surrey, Devon, Cornwall, Iona, Shetland, and Scotland took their turns on his easel, and, as the *Coral Fisher* attests, Italy was revisited in 1877.

At the Royal Academy Hook's pictures were thus put before the world:—1861. *Leaving Cornwall for the Whitby Fishing*, a little fishing-port; *Compass'd by the inviolate Sea* gives a fisherman, in summer, playing with a child, a fair young mother looking on; *Sea Urchins* depicts a couple of mischievous boys afloat on a huge mooring-block in a swift tideway. 1862. *The Acre by the Sea* gives a poor man's harvest on the cliff outside the farmer's boundary; *Trawlers* has the deck of a smack where two men have hauled in a net; *Sea Air* illustrates a road leading down to the shore, and Welsh people in a cart. 1863. *Leaving at Low Water*, a steep harbour

where the crew of a smack prepare to depart; *The Sailor's Wedding-party* is a picnic by the shore; *Prawn Catchers* exhibits two boys fishing in a salt pool, and a bare-legged girl approaching them. 1864. *The Broom Dasher* gives an itinerant manufacturer, and *From under the Sea* is a view of a mine on a cliff edge, with its gin far above the dark portal of the pit: three men in an iron waggon rise from below; *Cornish Miners leaving Work in the Mines* are seen trudging on a cliff. In *Milk for the Schooner* sailors land and take goats' milk from the herdsman; *A narrow Lane* comprises an old bridge in sunlight and traversed by a girl and boy with a water-bucket: an old man drives a cart across the stream. 1865. *Breton Fishermen's Wives* are seated at a table making a net; *The Mackerel Take* has sailors cleaning fish; *The Sardine Fleet* lands the little delicacies after the French manner; *The Sea-weed Gatherers* shows a girl and a child at work in sunlight on white sands. 1866. *Washerwomen, Brittany*, has five women kneeling at the edge of the sea; *Landing Salmon* has a fisherman knee-deep in water by the side of a boat: a girl waits with a barrow. "Give us our daily bread" represents Scotch herring-boats going out to fish; *Baiting for Haddock* comprises fishers shelling mussels for bait. 1867. *Digging for Sand-eels*, with a boy and girl armed with spuds, comprises sunny sea and shore; *Mother Carey's Chickens* shows an old man and two boys in a boat at sea, pulling as they rise with the rising wave; *A Comherd's Mischief*, an inland landscape, displays a dare-devil of a child mounted on a cow, driven by the mother of the urchin; *Herrings from Banff*, *Fishers clearing their Nets*, is described by the tide, and comprises a boat and its crew at a little pier. 1868. *The Lobster Catchers* has an old fisherman, in a rough boat, examining baskets, and a boy standing at the bow; *Morning after a Gale* is pathetic, with figures counting incoming vessels to a little port; "Are Chimney-sweepers black?" is a question answered to a little boy bathing in a sea-pool, by the appearance of a "sweep." 1869. *Cottagers making Cider* in a shed in the Farnham apple-country includes a girl bringing apples to the press, and other figures; *Caught by the Tide* has children cut off by the sea taking refuge among rocks; a huge steel-grey wave comes further in; *The Boat—it served them for kitchen and parlour and all*, gives fishermen at breakfast at sea. 1870. *Fish from the Dogger-bank*, smacks riding near a sandy shore, men and women inspecting the spoil landed on the beach; *Brimming Holland* (which Mr. Hook etched), her craft at a quay, where a woman bargains for a drake at a market-stall; *Sea Earnings* has a man and a boy fishing in a dangerous way; their family is on shore.

Later pictures must be within my readers' memories.

FREDERIC G. STEPHENS.



A COWHERD'S MISCHIEF

ALEXANDRE CABANEL







A FLORENTINE POLI

## ALEXANDRE CABANEL



ALEXANDRE CABANEL is one of the glorious French masters of modern painting—a master both by example and as a teacher, alike as the head of a school and the head of a studio. His own work, and his teaching as a professor, are the practical illustration of one of the noblest biographies which can be written of any artist of the present day. Thirty years of memorable productiveness, thirty years of brilliant success, have thrown the prestige of superior talent and a great reputation on his magnificent career. At once inventive and skilful, learned and original, uniting the charm of grace to the manliness of strength, he has not been the painter of a single style or a single picture. The infinite variety of his powers has saved him from repeating himself, and he has put himself in the first rank—at once, or by turns—in fresco, historical composition, and portrait-painting, while stamping all his work with the seal of his brilliant individuality.

One admirable quality, so rare as to be almost unique, distinguishes his mastery of his palette—that is his gift of practical inventiveness. With him labour seems constantly to regenerate his ideas; he studies only in order to create, and his learning enables him to improvise by inspiration. In a society so aristocratic in taste and education as that of France, a genius that is anything less than poetical runs too great a risk of being vulgar to gain unreserved or lasting admiration. Alexandre Cabanel, on the contrary, thanks to the poetry of his brush, has won a patent, so to speak, of matchless distinction in

charming the eye, and this is in fact the artist's supremest mission. It is no minor merit to have earned the right to these suffrages, and no small merit to have won and kept them. For thirty years they have been given to Cabanel, and they are at once the recompense of his past efforts and a strong moral guarantee for the future of his work.

It is in vain that certain detractors—for every superior talent has detractors—try to discredit the master's genius by accusing him of a narrow adherence to the exclusive and superannuated traditions of academical teaching. His conception and execution of portrait-painting are so thoroughly modern and worldly—in the aristocratic sense of the word—as amply to prove that his individuality and originality of treatment go so far as to be true innovation. Parisian beauty—the refined and bewitching product of our elegant and subtle civilisation—has surely found in

Cabanel its most delicate and sensitive interpreter, full at the same time of marvellous originality. And by what superb effort of masterly skill and true grandeur has he raised himself to the level of the finest decorative work of this century, in the radiant and enchanting ceiling of the Pavillon de Flore, so full of fairylike splendour! Some great lady, amazed by this *Triumph of Flora*, and almost dazzled by its sunlit intensity, exclaimed: "I was on the point of putting up my parasol as I looked at it!"

Alexandre Cabanel was born at Montpellier on the 23rd of September, 1823. At the age of eleven he began to study at the school of Art in that town, and his exceptional gifts at once secured the special attention of his teachers. His progress was very rapid, so much so as to lead to a singular incident. When he was no more than fourteen the Principal of the college at Saint Pons offered him the place of drawing-master in that school. This was indeed a young professor! but, whether from modesty or timidity, the boy declined the crushing honour. The offer was, however, a tempting one. Not to mention the pecuniary advantages and the distinction he would have gained, he



PARADISE LOST.

would also have had the benefit of further instruction in general learning; and an education thus obtained in return for a course of duties covered by four hours' teaching a week might be regarded as a boon from the gods; but Cabanel feared lest his vocation as an artist might be extinguished under a heap of dictionaries, and this dread kept him at Montpellier. He now devoted himself exclusively to drawing, and in his anxiety to master technical dexterity as early as possible, he threw himself into his work with a sort of delirium, neglecting all the sports and pleasures of boyhood. This passion for study possessed him to such a degree as to wean him even from the enjoyment of music, the only relaxation that had ever had any attraction for his lofty and sober mind. In this respect Cabanel showed a higher vocation than Ingres, for never, throughout his long life, would Ingres have sacrificed his violin to his palette—to him Mozart and Raphael were inseparable. Alexandre Cabanel took a different estimate of the two arts; he thought the pursuit of the two incompatible. He therefore gave up music and devoted himself exclusively to painting. All his endeavour, all his delight, centred in a persistent and unwearying study of the principles of drawing, and in practical experiments in colour. Every afternoon, after



several hours of studio-work, he might be met, his drawing-book in his hand, wandering about the streets of the town on the look-out for pictorial details, sketching the women in their southern costumes, and marking with an observant eye each freak and secret of natural effect. No better preparation for the lessons of his later life can be imagined.

However, his family had not the means of sending him to Paris, ardently as the lad desired it, and his hopes might have been long deferred if his good star had not risen to make good the spites of fortune. The town decided on sending the best painter of the Department to Paris at its own charges. A competition was proposed, and Alexandre Cabanel, now aged sixteen, carried off the prize by unanimous consent. This success made a noise in the town; every one began to be interested in the young prodigy. Among those who heaped compliments and congratulations on the successful candidate—who was quite overwhelmed at the prospect thus opened to him—was the illustrious Saint-Hilaire, the great botanist, who happened to be passing through Montpellier. The Marquis de



FIG. 1. 1843

Saint-Hilaire encouraged him warmly, and gave him a letter of recommendation to M. Picot, a member of the Institute. With his annual allowance to draw upon, and his heart high with hopes, Cabanel reached Paris in December, 1839. The remarkable talent of the "new pupil" could not fail to cause surprise in Picot's atelier, and the question was how he could have acquired such precocious certainty and firmness of touch. He himself accounted for it by saying that he had profited largely by the counsels of Eugène Devéria, who had frequently visited Montpellier, but the hints derived from the painter of *The Birth of Henry IV.* (Devéria's best-known work) were by themselves insufficient to explain the wonderful progress made by this beardless provincial lad. Cabanel's fellow-students soon saw in him a rising artist, and Picot himself could not fail to foresee a brilliant future for his new pupil. Never had he had a more teachable one, or met with a mind more apt to profit by his instructions. Grave and thoughtful by nature, Alexandre Cabanel was easily impressed by the principles of composition and harmonious arrangement which were so dear to Picot's soul; for Picot excelled in vast *mises-en-scène*, in sober and well-considered compositions, in a careful scheme of arrangement. His strict method of treatment was a wholesome discipline to the most erratic spirits, and all his pupils quailed before the inexorable severity of his pencil. For four years Cabanel worked every day in Picot's studio, filling up his time by studying at the *École des Beaux-Arts*, where his success in competition whetted his natural love of work. At length he was in a position to exhibit in the Salon of 1843 a picture of *Christ in the Garden of Olives*. This first public effort was a great success, and encouraged the young painter to hold his own. In 1845 he shared the "Grand

Prix de Rome" with Benouville. The struggle between the competitors was a close one; in fact, so close that two prizes of equal value, and tenable for an equal length of time, were adjudged, the merits of the two students being too even to admit of any distinction.

Cabanel's enthusiasm on reaching Rome may be imagined; his absorbed contemplation under the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and in the *Stanze* of the Vatican; his long walks in the *Transtevere* or along the shores of the Tiber. He fed his soul on the works of the great masters, and they possessed him wholly. The works he sent home

betrayed the influence of these glorious models. He made no attempt to conceal it, and the last picture he painted in Rome—in 1851—was still evidently the work of a follower of Raphael. In the *Death of Moses*, in which the head of Jehovah might have been cut out of a fresco of the Renaissance, a skilful adaptation of the experiences of a thoughtful and intelligent student were very obvious, though the picture was also prophetic of an artist in the "grand style," capable of evolving from his own individuality the types and forms he might need. This was shown soon after his return home.

He came back to Paris the richer by five years of study, and fully equipped for original work; and, as if he were indeed destined to be favoured by circumstance, he no sooner found himself in Paris once more than he was commissioned to execute twelve panels for the grand saloon of the Hôtel de Ville. This commission, procured for him by the unsought recommendation of M. Lesueur, the architect, at once established his reputation. He was to decorate the room with allegorical pictures of the Months, and he painted twelve panels and twenty-four spandrels of the most delightful lightness and delicacy. These works perished in the destruction of the building under the Commune of 1871. These representations of the Months gained the young painter the good opinion of Paul Delaroche, who, unasked, and indeed without knowing Cabanel, moved simply



MADAME LA COMTESSE DE MERCY-ARGENTEAU.

by his admiration of the work he had already done, exerted himself to procure another commission for the promising decorative artist. Such a triumph as this was something quite out of the common, and proves that the works must have been of very high character, for Delaroche was not easily led into enthusiasm. To win the good graces of a man who, though amiable, was essentially sceptical, a combination was needed of sound style in drawing with a happy invention and due charm of treatment—three things rarely found united. An order for *The Apotheosis of St. Louis* for the Luxembourg Palace was the outcome of Delaroche's interest. This work, which is full of lofty individuality, graced the chapel at Vincennes before it was removed to a public gallery. It was very highly spoken of when it hung in a place of honour at the Great Exhibition of 1855, and Delaroche's gifted protégé obtained for it a first-class medal.

Cabanel had, however, before this produced a considerable number of works. Besides those he had sent from Rome we may mention a *Christian Martyr*, an *Autumn Evening*, and some interesting portraits: one of Mme. Pommier, one of Mrs. Sartoris (Adelaide Kemble); Victor Massé, the composer; Alfred Bruyas; Gastinel, the musician; Messrs. Léon and Henri Maré; Mlle. L. Maré; Mesdames Maré, Aragon,



THE TRIUMPH OF FLORA



*Homme de Hell.* Besides these he afterwards painted *Mme. Rodriguez*, *Mme. Raba*, and *Mme. Paton*. This unexpected rush of sitters made him at once the fashionable portrait-painter, while the Months at the Hôtel de Ville had made him known as an historical painter; and he did, in fact, divide his attention between portraits and works of a higher class.

We will now go through the "Salons" of the last few years, and pause in each to consider the works exhibited by Cabanel; we shall thus be brought face to face with his finest works.

1857. Cabanel, whose powers were already ripe for the loftiest themes, sent that year to the gallery in the Champs Élysées a picture of *Julius II. visiting the Studio of Michael Angelo*; one of *Othello relating his Battles*, and *Boniface and Aglaia*. This Aglaia, a very sweet embodiment of pious melancholy, shows clearly and adequately what is Cabanel's ideal of religious beauty.

Like all great inventors, Cabanel has ample reserves of study; but he has above all a strongly-developed power of intuition and assimilation, and that is the true secret of his artistic wealth. Fertility of productiveness



THE BASKET SCENE. Merchant of Venice

has always been a sign of superior genius; and I may add that the method and discipline which govern the use of that gift is no less an evidence of his power, and full and sovereign mastery of his art. To work for thirty years without decline, to be always ready and eager for a new struggle; never to quail as to the result, though without any excess of self-confidence; to be not over-careful of health and rest, and yet to remain youthful, vigorous, energetic and brilliant in every finished work—such a balance of faculties is itself the highest praise of the mind which regulates their use to the sole glory of Art.

All the great artists of the present century have been great workers; Cabanel has kept up the tradition. But the power of working long and steadily and well would be an illusory gift indeed, if the outcome were not a work of Art and consecrated by Art. Poetry steps in to crown the noble task, and to light it up, as it were, with a distinct reflection of the human soul.

*Boniface and Aglaia* is one of the pictures from which such a mysterious light seems to shine; and yet it is not mystical, for Cabanel, a faithful believer in immortal beauty, preserves the perfume of the antique even in his religious works. In Art, indeed, he is a Greek, and hardly converted. Plato's tender and graceful paganism smiles on him and tempts him; and perhaps we can do no better than borrow from the lovely myths of antiquity a simile which may best define the qualities of his Art. "Cabanel," said a keen observer to me,

"Cabanel seems to have dipped his delicate brush in the very oil of the symbolical lamp by whose ideal flame Psyche lights him to his work."

Immediately after the exhibition of 1857, Cabanel was commissioned by Émile Péreire, the wealthy banker, to execute a ceiling for his splendid residence. It was a perfect success, and the artist was so happy as to gain the enthusiastic admiration of Théophile Gautier, who describes it as follows:—

"Within a hexagon is framed a large circle, filled, apparently, by the free atmosphere of space and of luminous sky, for Cabanel's ceiling shows us a higher realm, and is not merely a picture turned upside down over our heads. This opening to the sky, filling the centre of the ceiling, gives it height and air. It is surrounded

by an entablature terminated by a balustrade. On the steps of an amphitheatre are groups of figures, very gracefully and happily composed, representing the *Five Senses*. The sense of *Sight* is personified by a painter leaning forward towards a beautiful half-draped female figure, his model, the better to study the details; in fact, can sight be put to a better use than that of studying beauty to immortalise it? *Hearing* is figured by a singer, or rather by a Muse singing, accompanied by a musician, who listens in rapture whilst playing. The ecstatic expression of the singer, with her head thrown back, is very charming; we seem to hear the song breathed from her parted lips, which are curved with the most exquisite foreshortening. In *Smell* we have one of the most charming of the five groups—a Venetian lady at her toilet, sitting in the midst of flowers, while her attendant perfumes and dresses her golden hair. *Touch* is more symbolically treated as a pair of lovers. The cavalier—less confident than Alphonse d'Avalon, Marquis du Gast, in Titian's picture—only lays his hand lightly on his lady's shoulder with a thrill of ecstasy, not daring to be bold. This graceful in-



MORNING.



SMELL.

cident is represented with enchanting modesty and delicacy. *Taste* is figured by a Satyr, reclining in the very beatitude of drunkenness, looking through the crystal flask that he has already half emptied, at the sun, which turns the purple juice to rubies in the light. By his side is a Bacchante pressing grapes. Below each group are winged children charged with attributes appropriate to the Senses."

"This ceiling is painted throughout in a clear bright key, and is luminous in effect, neither chalky nor washed-out; having, indeed, a fresh and pleasing tone which is too often wanting in the work of modern artists, who aim at reproducing the mellow tones of the old masters without considering how the lapse of many centuries has dimmed the colours that once were vivid and brilliant."

Théophile Gautier has here expressed the views of every visitor to M. Péreire's house; and when, at a later date, the room for which this ceiling had been executed was finished, they were no less captivated by the six large panels on which Cabanel had depicted the *Hours*. Such an undertaking, in one of the best-known houses of

the Faubourg St. Honoré, might have proved fatal to the growing fame of a young artist who was not sure alike of his purpose and his methods; but Cabanel was no longer a beginner feeling his way, and Armand, the architect of the mansion, selected him as a master in the requirements of decorative painting.

Other artists had also been employed at the same time to decorate portions of M. Péreire's hôtel; but though a generous emulation might stimulate their talents, no thought of competition guided their selection. To say that Cabanel surpassed himself would be to institute a comparison not so much with himself as with others, and



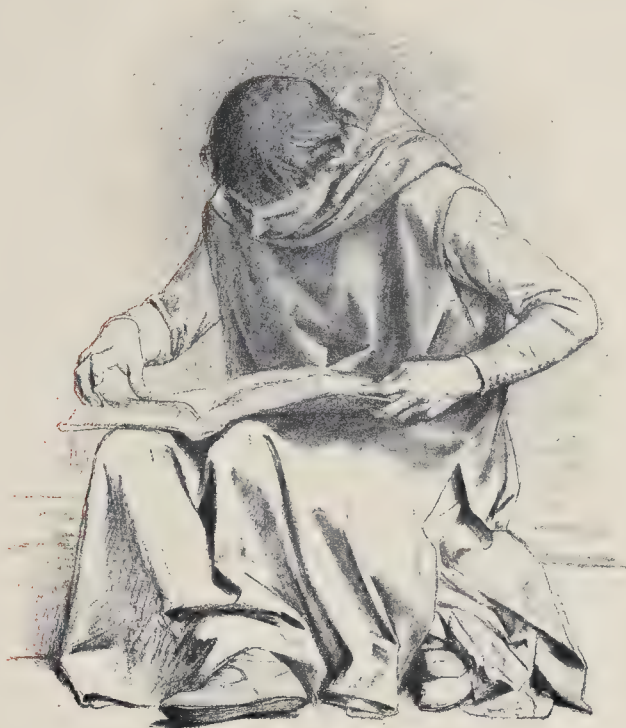
STUDY FOR THE TRIUMPH OF FLORA

this we cannot attempt. We have only thought it necessary to refer to this co-operation in execution of a scheme of decoration in order to express our satisfaction at the occurrence now and then of rich amateurs capable, like Péreire, of opening wide the doors of their sumptuous dwellings, and giving up the walls of their palaces to the compositions of the most admired painters.

Thus fairly launched in the midst of the financial world, Cabanel was soon loaded with commissions for decorative work. His ambition, however, was to devote himself in preference to history and portrait painting. He resisted these tempting offers, only executing one other ceiling in four compartments, for the house of M. Constant Say.



1859. In this year he exhibited *The Musician's Widow* ("La Veuve du Maître de Chapelle"), a deeply pathetic work, representing a family in mourning listening sadly to the last melody composed by the father they have but lately lost—a plaintive air, played on the organ by one of the daughters of the poor musician. The widow and orphans are sitting in a cheerless home, in the dusk—the hour of sadness. The memory of their lost father has struck a chill to all their hearts; then the eldest girl has gone to the organ and has begun to sing the last hymn composed by the deceased musician. Her voice breaks with emotion; her sisters are sobbing, her mother is sunk in grief. Cabanel is fond of these emotional scenes, and fills them with dignified sentiment, for our painter



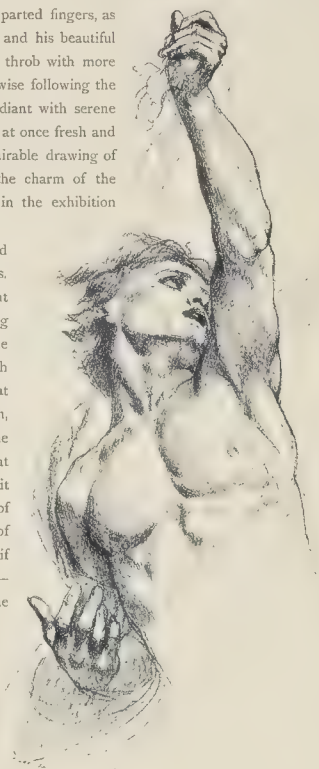
STUDY FOR THE EDUCATION OF ST. LOUIS (Panthéon)

is the poet of mild resignation, smitten with the melancholy of modern life, and he has found some of his happiest inspirations in these visions of sorrow. In his portraits, even, we can trace this quality of his genius, in the attitudes of the figures and in their fixed calm gaze.

1861. As there was to be no exhibition in 1860, Cabanel devoted himself for a long series of months to portrait painting. Mr. E. Paton sat to him; Mme. Broussonnet, of Montpellier; M. and Mme. Balsan; Pacini, the composer; Mme. Isaac Pêreire and her two daughters, Henriette and Jeanne; M. Armand, the architect; Mme. Oppenheim, of Cologne; Mme. Archdeacon; Comte Jean de Tis-Kiewitz. Then, as the Salon of 1861 drew near, he hastened to finish his last works of this kind: Mme. Emile Pêreire, Mrs. Ridgway, and M. Rouher, so as to be able to devote himself to two great compositions, *A Nymph carried off by a Satyr* and *A*

*Florentine Poet. The Nymph*, now at the Luxembourg, is full of dramatic action, and its warm glow of tone, the fine texture of the flesh, and the tender and brilliant colouring, made it one of the most remarkable works of the year. Of all Cabanel's works it is the one which displays the most vigour and variety of action. The Dryad, clasped in the Satyr's arms, struggles in vain to escape from his embrace; her quivering skin is firmly and vigorously painted, and of a brilliant whiteness that contrasts admirably with the hairiness of her goat-footed ravisher. The struggle is a desperate one, but it will be short, and the woods will soon cease to echo the cries of the victim. Near this dramatic work there hung a calmer scene, in which the painter had embodied the same serene charm as in the *Aglaia*. A *Florentine Poet*, seated on a stone bench, is murmuring his love sonnets; one hand is raised, with parted fingers, as if he were dropping pearls—pearls of harmony. A lover and his beautiful mistress are listening to the inspired singer; their hearts throb with more rapturous pain to his fervid verse. Two youths are likewise following the modulations of the soft Tuscan tongue; every face is radiant with serene enjoyment and the springtide of life, and the sentiment is at once fresh and ardent. The splendour of the Italian costumes, the admirable drawing of the figures, and the truth of the expression, added to the charm of the subject, made this one of the most successful pictures in the exhibition of 1861.

1863. Cabanel's fame was extending day by day, and the artist grew more and more confident of his own powers. He determined this year to surpass himself. Not content with having shown in turn his severer and his more pleasing styles—dreamy or fanciful, according to the subject—he determined to exhibit on this occasion a picture which should amaze even his most eager admirers. Not that they were to be startled by the grandeur of the composition, by the splendour of the accessories, or by the novelty of the subject. Refined elegance and the purest taste were what he counted on to render it a *chef-d'œuvre*. He meant it to be a perfect combination of all the highest qualities of painting, and a crowning proof of the mature manliness of his genius. Cabanel was now forty—the age at which, if ever, an artist creates works of lasting power and value—and as though he feared that he might fail to rise to the level of his highest ambitions, he retired to his tents, far from the beauties of the fashionable world, to dream at leisure of this masterpiece of his riper years, determined to assert his claim to rank with the great masters of the modern school by a work in which he might embody all his powers and all his gifts. The event did not fail to justify his purpose. The enthusiasm of artists and amateurs alike hailed the work to which the painter had so fondly devoted himself, with applause and admiration: *The Birth of Venus*, which is now one of the gems of the Luxembourg. Nevertheless, Cabanel gave himself up in this work to the study of form alone, without seeking any of the more seductive graces; but his sense of style, which had now become a part of his being, was too completely paramount to fail him for an instant. Thus *The Birth of Venus* caused a genuine sensation. Softly cradled on the opal-blue waves, Venus awakes to life. A tender radiance seems to be shed by her snowy limbs resting on the billows, her arms bathed in the waters, her sheeny hair—as though this revelation of Beauty threatened to put an end to the reign of Aurora herself. She languidly opens her eyes, and would seem to be willing to postpone the hour of her triumph. Ere long she will rise, this fair daughter of the



STUDY FOR THE TRIUMPH OF FLORA.

ocean, in all her sovereign beauty, to dazzle gods and mortals. A little swarm of Loves are already fluttering round her, besieging her with caresses and kisses, and crowding down upon her like a flight of doves, as if to rouse her from her too long slumbers. Cabanel has given us all the poetic grace of the antique myth, combined with supreme mastery in drawing and the delicate effects of the most transparent colouring. The lines of the goddess's figure are perfectly modelled; the swell of the hips displays a lovely curve, her attitude is harmoniously composed, every line is in perfect taste; the whole mass is graceful in outline and detail. The fair divinity, rose and white on the

blue waves, is seen rising from the depths of Neptune's realm like the pearl-shell of the Indian seas, and the iridescent sheen of her dripping limbs is exquisitely pretty. Cabanel's dexterous brush has modelled to perfection the tender roundness and lissome grace of the goddess of love. Some critics thought that it would have been better to leave out the five little Cupids who disturb the spontaneous waking of the goddess, since this garland of Loves only repeats the same chord of colour as that of the principal figure, and so divides the attention of the spectator. This objection does not, however, seem sufficiently serious to detract from the general merit of the work. Nay, it might be possible to oppose this view, and to vindicate the presence of the charming little group. Cabanel's Venus would assuredly be recognisable without these fluttering little Loves. This exquisite study of the nude, elevated and purified by the most thorough style, would at once claim our homage as the goddess of beauty; still, this flight of winged children lends charm to the treatment of the subject, and defines it with infinite delicacy and precision. The picture is, indeed, faultless; and if it were not for the mysterious splash and murmur of the waves, we might take this Venus to be a Greek statue animated by the spirit of modern feeling.

This work made a great sensation in the Salon of 1863, and won for the painter the decoration of the Légion d'Honneur and the much-coveted title of Membre de l'Institut. Besides this he was made professor of painting at the Académie des Beaux-Arts.

1865. But a still greater distinction awaited Cabanel. One day, when he was paying his usual visit to his new class-room, a gentleman-in-waiting came to command his attendance on the Emperor Napoleon III. Cabanel immediately obeyed the summons; the Emperor received him graciously, dwelt on his success, and at the close of a condescending interview commissioned him to paint his

portrait in his robes. The sovereign and the artist were already acquainted, for the Emperor was an enthusiastic admirer of Cabanel's works, and had purchased *The Rape of the Nymph* and *The Birth of Venus* for his private collection. These pictures, and the portrait of the *Comtesse de Clermont-Tonnerre* in the Salon of 1863, had made the Emperor decide on having his own painted by the same hand. Cabanel was installed in a room in the Tuileries, and the sittings began. None but an artist of a keen insight and a thoughtful character could have caught a likeness of this monarch, with his enigmatic expression, or have understood the restlessness, the absorption, the whole inscrutable mystery of a man whose fortunes had been so amazing. Napoleon III., without a spark of the genius of Buonaparte, had, by the fitful light of his own political creed, achieved a stroke of



STUDY FOR THE TRIUMPH OF FLORA.



despotism where the grenadiers of "Brumaire" would perhaps have failed; and while the first Napoleon won his supremacy by the splendour of his victories, his nephew satisfied his ambition by sheer force of will. A ruler thus able to supply the place of military glory by firmness of purpose is not a man of common mould; his features cannot fail to reflect something of his mind; and Cabanel fully realised this as he stood face to face with his illustrious sitter. It was in fact a real pleasure to him to have an opportunity of studying at his leisure this sovereign countenance, of detecting the faint changes of expression in the eyes, and of tracing the slight clouds of varying feeling that crossed those impassible features.

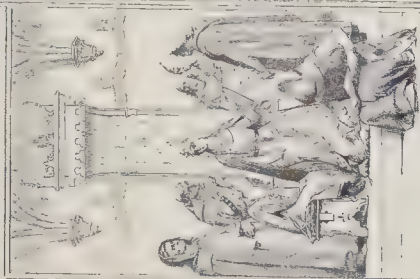
Cabanel loves such a psychological study, and had succeeded too well in them to doubt the result this time. But was it, after all, the face of his sitter that he had to consider? Was it not rather his official character and dignity and the representative of a type of majesty for which he could neither consult nor follow any æsthetic tradition? Our customs, our refractory spirit, our political scepticism, no longer accept the presentment of sovereignty crowned and surrounded by the pompous and solemn magnificence of Louis XIV. as painted by Rigaud. The æsthetics of modern ceremonial are not established, but they are not those of the past. How would Cabanel render them? Cabanel has never been commonplace; there was no fear of his producing a vulgar work. It was new, it was bold; and it much disconcerted certain minds who were only too pleased, in reality, to find in it an excuse for an epigram aimed at the Emperor. Cabanel's achievement was nothing less than the introduction of a black tail-coat into an historical painting; and the stroke of skill by which this costume, till then regarded as quite out of the pale of Art, was rescued from contempt, would have been more admired if the perils of success in so audacious an attempt had been more fully understood.

How, then, had the artist represented his illustrious client? We quote the following description from the "Gazette des Beaux-Arts."

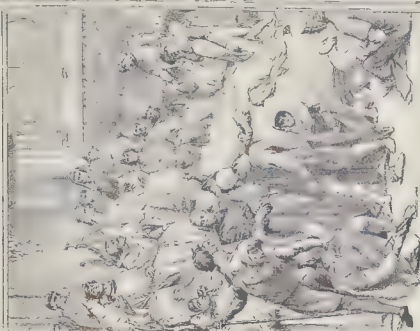
"The Emperor is standing in one of the rooms of the Tuileries, dressed in a black court-suit, with knee-breeches—a sombre costume relieved only by his white waistcoat and the red ribbon of the Legion of Honour. His right hand rests on his hip; his left is on a table, on which we see the crown and the "main de justice"; the imperial robes are thrown over the back of an arm-chair. In the background we see the long perspective of a splendidly gilt and decorated gallery. M. Cabanel, who knows his business as a painter as well as any man, has displayed a vast amount of talent in the execution of this picture; the head is subtly rendered, a good likeness, and finely modelled in a softened light; the proportions are carefully and accurately studied."

Was the artist unequal to the task before him? No one, be sure, ever said or thought this. No one, perhaps, but Cabanel could have placed side by side, and in such immediate juxtaposition, the magnificence of the imperial robe, with its constellation of golden bees, and the somewhat meagre sobriety of a black coat. Well, and in point of fact the black coat has acquired a really noble aspect, an air of civic dignity in spite of its dingy austerity and rather familiar simplicity. This black coat has not made the imperial Majesty look bourgeois; for, after all, what is there to surprise us in seeing Napoleon III. in an ordinary evening dress? And what are the critics thinking of who complain of the innovation, when, on the other hand, they accuse Cabanel of his adherence to classical prejudices? No; a black coat is not classical, particularly in this place; but Cabanel has, nevertheless, proved that it may be made so by perfection of painting. It is certain that logic is not the most brilliant attribute of some critics. Thus we have seen the same erratic spirits cry out at this Cæsar in a black coat who took it as a matter of course, when another Cæsar, the first Napoleon, was placed in a simple greatcoat on the top of a Roman monument. We need not discuss the real motives of this inconsistency. For criticism to be independent and impartial, we should require to believe that no influence hostile to Art had affected its impressions or its judgment. But in thus dwelling on the injustice of some few, I seem perhaps to be forgetting that the majority of universal suffrage gave the final verdict, and sealed the high rank of this portrait, which must henceforth be famous in the history of contemporary Art.

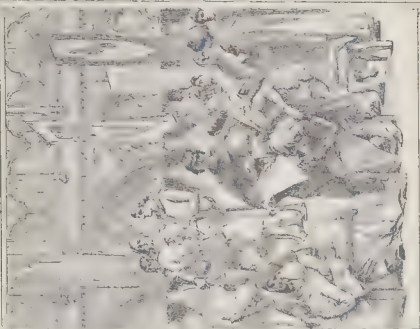
In the same year—1865—Cabanel received the medal of honour from the hands of the jury. There was of course no lack of envious voices to whisper of favouritism, but the public knew the past career of the painter and did not listen. As a portrait painter he had no doubt won the good graces of their Majesties, but their favour, though in itself an honour, would not have led the jury but for Cabanel's undoubted merit. Cabanel had every right to be satisfied as to the legitimacy of his success without worrying himself about an accidental coincidence, and indeed another portrait exhibited at the same time, that of *Mme. la Vicomtesse de Ganay*, displayed all his finest qualities.



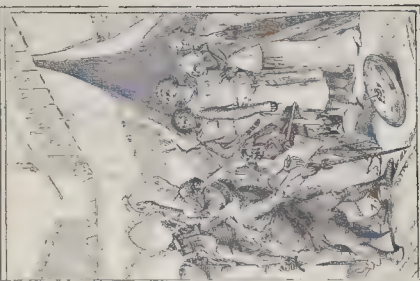
BRANCH OF CAVALRY PREPARING OVER THE  
EVACUATION OF ST. LOUIS



THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ST. LOUIS



PAINTINGS IN THE LEFT TRANSEPT OF THE PANTHÉON



CAPITALS OF ST. LOUIS IN PALESTINE





1867. At the Universal Exhibition at Paris in this year, Cabanel brought together all his more important recent works: *The Rape of the Nymph*, *The Birth of Venus*, and the portraits of *Mme. de Clermont-Tonnerre*, *M. Rouher*, and *The Emperor*. Then, in order to vary this collection of well-known works by the introduction of something new, he sent a very fine picture: *Paradise Lost*. This enormous canvas was a commission from King Louis of Bavaria; it had been begun in 1866, in consequence of the instructions of M. Klenzel, architect and aulic counsellor to the German sovereign. Cabanel had spent much time and thought on this work, and had wrought it with a loving hand. To him, in fact, it appeared in the light of a representative work—representative of the French contemporary school in the Maximilianeum at Munich. He could have had no greater incitement. He composed a picture on a grandiose scale, and in the style he deemed most suited to do credit to the French historical school. Adam and Eve, crouching beneath the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, are bewailing the first sin. The golden-haired mother of us all clings trembling to Adam's arm, for Jehovah is wroth. The Creator himself, in divine anger, is seen descending on the wings of angels, to judge the guilty pair.

Cabanel composed his picture with a view to a balance of masses, and with an evident purpose of following the traditions of the great Italian masters. The head of Jehovah, in particular, reminds us of Raphael; and the influence of the painter of the *Loggie*, far from diminishing the merit of the work, has increased it, so happily had Cabanel assimilated his impressions. The jury of the great Exhibition judged it worthily, for the work procured for the artist the first prize of honour; that is to say, the highest distinction conferred.



STUDY FOR A SARACEN (Captivity of St. Louis).

1869, 1870. After this grand jubilee in the Champ de Mars, Cabanel returned to portrait painting. His last success had added greatly to his reputation, and he was more than ever in fashion among the beauties of the Paris world. The *Marquise de Brissac*, the *Marquis* and *Marquise d'Alligre*, *Mme. de Vatimesnil*, the *Duc* and *Duchesse de Valombréuse*, *Mme. d'Hely d'Aissel*, *Prince Michael Gortschakoff*, *Mme. Aimé Seillières*, and *Mme. Frédéric Seillières* sat to him; and afterwards *Mr. and Mrs. MacCormick*, *Mme. Carotte*, *Mme. Ury de Gwisburg*, *Mme. Hunewell*, *Miles. Barbey* and *Mlle. Dreyfus*. Several of these portraits were exhibited with generous liberality on the part of the owners. In 1870, Cabanel found time, in the midst of his constant occupations, to paint another historical episode: *The Death of Francesca da Rimini*. This picture, now in the Luxembourg, displays the calm and solid style characteristic of the painter, and is a worthy successor to his earlier works of the same class.

1872—1874. After the peace of 1871, Cabanel again took up the work which the terrors of war had interrupted; beauty and fashion once more crowded the studio of their painter-in-ordinary—the *Comtesse de Mercy-Argenteau*, *Marquise de Marmier*, *Comtesse de Juigné*, the *Duchesse de Luynes*, *Comtesse de Lavalette*, *Vicomtesse de Saint-Roman*, *Baronesses de Bourgoing* and *de Gargon*. Following in the wake of these leaders of the aristocracy came the long array of the successful moneyed classes: *Mr. and Mrs. Warren* of Boston, besides *Mme. Pillet-Will*, *Mme. Cibiel*, *Mrs. Stephen Brooks*, *Mme. Doyon*, and others. Many of these portraits were exhibited; but with all this work on hand Cabanel found time to send to the Salon a picture called *The First Vision of St. John*, and a figure, *Giacomina*, in a fifteenth-century Florentine costume. The elegance and charm of his style had captivated the world of taste.

1875, 1876. Cabanel was, in fact, a master of every grace which could attract the female instinct. He was consummate in the arrangement of accessories, subtle and poetic in his interpretation of the human face, and judicious in his rendering. He could see with absolute truth the features and details of the model before him, but he seemed to delight in reading their purport through a halo of mystery, and to detect in every woman's expression a vague shade of melancholy. But this melancholy of which he was so fond was not sadness, nor even languour; it was a sort of hereditary reserve—the reserve of a proud race or of a lofty soul. There was something irresistibly attractive in this charm which none could fail to feel. Also, it must be said that his claim to be an historical painter did the artist good service in the eyes of the world, and was an additional recommendation.

Among his wealthy sitters were many who were desirous of possessing original compositions from his hand, and in consequence he exhibited in 1875 and 1876 two works which made some sensation: *The Sulamite*, from the *Song of Solomon*, and *Tamar*. *The Sulamite* was a commission from Miss Wolfe, of New York, and other Americans followed her example—Mr. Vanderbilt, whose wealth is notorious, Mr. Levy Leiter, Mr. Hewlbert, and Mr. Hauk. For these clients Cabanel painted *Penelope Scanning the Horizon*, and *Pia de Tolomei dying in the Maremma*; *Ginevra dei Amari discovered in her Tomb*, *Phaedra*, and *Lucretia with Tarquinius Sextus*.

The great Exhibition of 1878. For the last three years Cabanel had been working part of each day at an enormous mural painting. It was in the summer of 1875 that my father, the Marquis de Chennevières, at that time General Director of Fine Arts in France, projected the complete decoration of the Panthéon, the Church of Ste. Geneviève. His dream, from the moment of his entering on his office, was the promotion of historical painting on a grand scale, and, above all, the application of the best powers of the modern school to a grand undertaking which should survive as worthy to represent the condition of French art during the second half of the nineteenth century. He therefore proposed to select some building in which the efforts of living painters and sculptors might be combined. Most of the churches and public offices of Paris being decorated, it was of course out of the question to destroy the works already existing. What was wanted was a structure bare of all decoration and at the same time spacious enough to contain the works and conceptions of the most dissimilar masters, without their clashing in style and effect. The Panthéon was the only building which fulfilled these conditions. The Marquis de Chennevières therefore called upon our most distinguished living artists to decorate Soufflot's basilica, dividing the space among them, and Cabanel was entrusted with one of the largest commissions. The whole scheme of decoration was to depict the life of Ste. Geneviève, patron saint of Paris, combined with the history of the introduction of Christianity into France, and he was to paint, on the four left-hand wall-spaces between the columns of the Chapel of the Virgin, the history of the principal events in the life of St. Louis.

A work of such vast extent, and treated with the dignity that characterises Cabanel, could not fail to occupy a place of honour at the great Exhibition, where it was placed before being taken to the Panthéon. This enormous work is full of grace and sentiment; the style is flowing and noble, the drawing admirable, the feeling dignified and serene: in short, it is thoroughly characteristic of Cabanel. Above all it displays the most masterly knowledge; and if the Church of Ste. Geneviève is destined to become to future generations a profitable study, with its noble frescoes by Puvis de Chavannes, Baudry, Delaunay, Bonnat, and Laurent de Gallaude, Cabanel's compositions will always be a valuable lesson in practical treatment, as those of Puvis de Chavannes will be a revelation of the hidden springs of picturesque suggestiveness. This vast conception is adequately enlivened, too, by a rich and sober scheme of colour and a well-preserved tone throughout. Here and there we might, perhaps, wish for a spark of more martial fire, something a trifle less virtuously demure

in the action of the figures. Still, it may be said, on the other hand, that a serene style of treatment is never out of place in a triptych.

Not long before undertaking this epic work Cabanel had painted *The Triumph of Flora*, to decorate the



INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE FROM THE PARC MONCEAU

Pavillon de Flore at the Tuileries. This important work had experienced many vicissitudes. It was already sketched when the war of 1870 broke out, and it was burnt during the disturbances of the Commune. Then in 1872 it was resuscitated, radiantly defiant of the Vandalism of the mob. The goddess of Spring is seen riding in a golden chariot across the azure vault of ether. Round her path dance a bevy of youthful creatures



sporting and kissing: it is the feast of flowers, of poets, of the amorous muses. This gay and gracefully-composed procession undulates over the curves of the vaulted ceiling like a living allegory. Few works of this kind of modern times have been so successful, for the traditions of such grandiose decorative work are tottering on their foundations. Cabanel has, too, an evident preference for high-class decorative painting. The fruition of his ideas costs him many months of labour, and a conscientious mind always takes most pleasure in its most careful efforts.

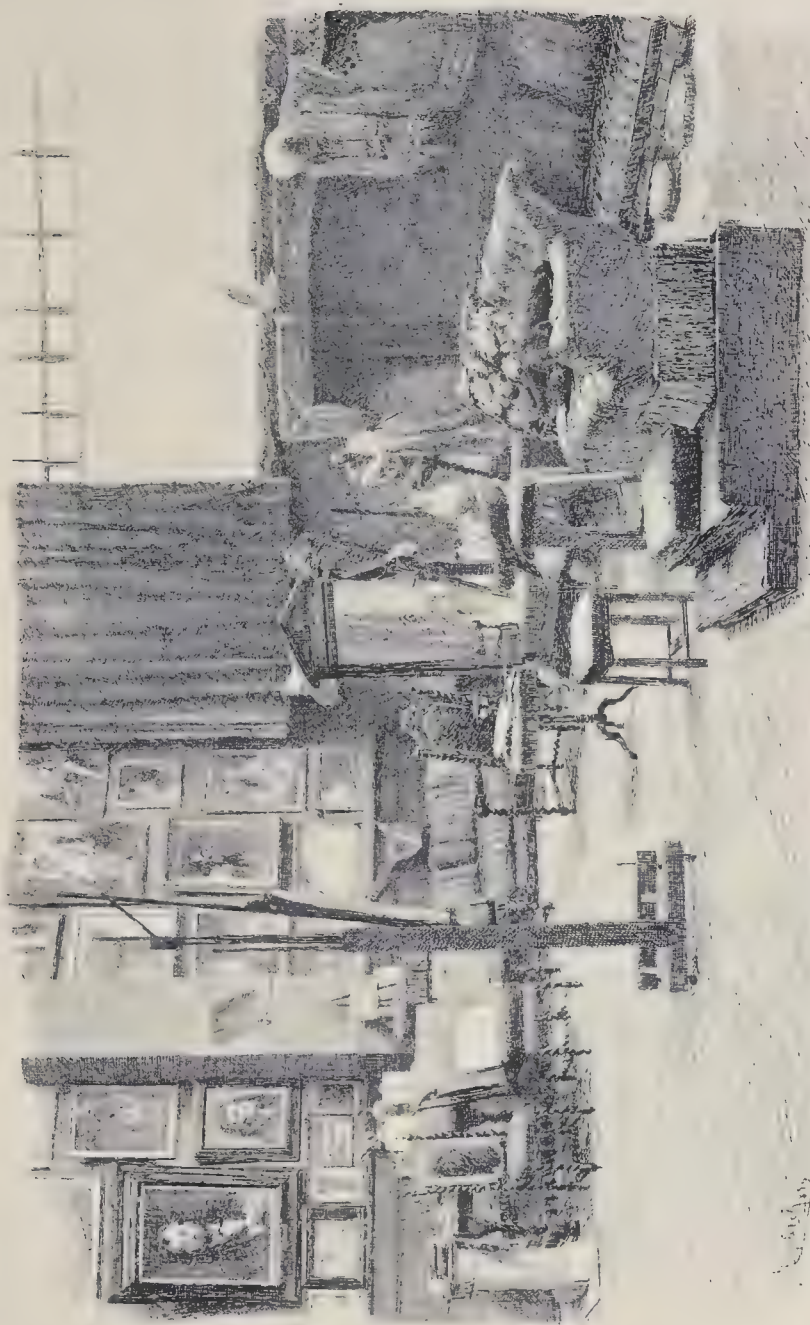
1879, 1880. As soon as the great Exhibition was opened, Cabanel went back to his portrait painting. *Mme. Théophile Gautier* sat to him; the *Comtesse de Clermont-Tonnerre*, *Mme. Louis Adam*, the *Comtesse Carolyi*, *Miss MacCormick*, *Mme. Zarifi*, of Constantinople, *Mrs. Field*, of New York; then his good friend *M. Armand*, the architect, and *Joseph Perraud* the sculptor.

Then came a number of commissions from Mr. Mackay, a rich American amateur, and a power in the moneyed world, who gained an honourable notoriety among French artists by his large purchases of works of Art. Among the commissions given by the American visitors to French artists, family portraits very naturally hold a considerable interest, and the choice of a satisfactory portrait painter much exercised the minds of the family. After a brief review of the most fashionable masters, they selected Cabanel as their painter-in-ordinary; and the artist, who had just finished a picture of *Phædra*, for the Salon of 1880, held himself in readiness to accommodate the tastes of his new clients.

1881—1883. He began by executing their portraits, and proceeded to paint pictures for them; thus, after painting *Mr. W. Mackay* four times, and portraits of *Mrs. and Miss Evelyn Mackay*, and of *Mrs. Hungerford*, he exhibited during these years *Rebecca and Eliezer*, *The Marriage of Tobit*, and several other subjects, all painted for these wealthy patrons. The effect produced among the American colony in Paris may be readily imagined, and at the present time every American of any pretensions rushes to Cabanel's studio; some, like *Mr. and Mrs. Brayton*, *Mrs. Baldwin*, *Mrs. Worsham*, *Mrs. Henry Sloane*, *Miss Mathews*, *Miss Clapp*, simply to get their likenesses duly rendered by the master, others to buy his original compositions; and in fact we can only rejoice in the favour shown to Cabanel by these foreigners, for our greatest living historical painter is a worthy representative in other lands of what the perfect training, thorough knowledge, and ample experience of our artists can produce. In these days of eccentricities and fantastic novelties, we may well be proud of a man who is so well able to veil from the eyes of strangers the somewhat slovenly charms of our national Art, and to divert attention from the imminent decadence of high-class painting.

This completes the list of the brilliant array of pictures exhibited by Cabanel. As we read through the catalogue of so many and such various works, we wonder at the energy of the painter, but when we add to these labours the management of a large school of art, our surprise is still greater. Rubens took for his motto the words "*Diu nocturne incubando*"—meditate day and night. This constant thoughtfulness seems to have possessed Cabanel, and it is of itself enough to account for the fertility of his brush. He works, nevertheless, with a careful deliberation which seems little fitted to result in great productiveness, for no draughtsman ever corrects his drawing more scrupulously, considers each stroke, or studies his work more patiently. Every composition, every portrait, has been painted and repainted perhaps twenty times before it quits his studio, so great is his respect for his art and his disbelief in the value of his first inspirations. No one, in looking at his finished canvas, and admiring the apparent ease of the workmanship, would ever suspect this persistent labour; for, by a marvel of skill, in spite of all this retouching, he gives us an impression of perfect freedom where others would have shown the traces of their hesitation. The multiplicity of his pictures is, in fact, a proof of his incessant toil; he never takes any rest, never indulges in the pleasures of society. His whole life is devoted to the worship of Art, and it glides away in simple, noble, and happy labour. Few artists have lived so altogether worthily.

His teaching has been as full of fruition as his own work. How many young painters owe their success to Cabanel's guidance! How many eager and brilliant artists have come from his studio! The whole constellation of Regnault, Humbert, Cormon, Thirion, Dupain, Morot, Besnard, Gervex, Joseph Blanc, Bastien Lepage, Cot, Blanchard, owed, or still owe, to Cabanel a sound classical and high-class training. What is most singular, is, that his teaching, far from being systematic like that of many heads of schools, does not fetter any temperament, while it guides, but never oppresses, the most dissimilar minds. This respect for the individuality of impressions and interpretations is by no means the least remarkable quality in a master whose technical method is so



THE STUDIO





consummate; for this rarely liberal spirit has left room for several generations of powerful and original artists to develop into vigour under the beneficent shade of sound principles. Cabanel's teaching, to be at once so tolerant and so eclectic, was of course a labour of love and liking. Ask, if you will, any one of his numerous disciples the secret of his attachment to his master, and he will tell you of the attractiveness of his studio, the kind



THE ANTE-ROOM.

encouragement of his advice, the strictness of his method, the interest taken in his pupils, and the unfailing liberality of his friendship. He constantly watches their progress, urging their merits in competition, and inciting them to come forward, promotes their success, and even keeps a faithful eye on their interests in their maturer years. This fatherly care has never yet been repaid with ingratitude, and not one of his disciples,

however boastful and wise in his own conceit, has ever repudiated his debt towards Cabanel. In fact, the fame of the painter has seconded the kind-heartedness of the man in their estimation; for the better Cabanel is known, the more surprising does his unerring skill appear. No painter is more thoroughly a master of the theories and the grammar of his Art. He has passed unspotted through a period of easygoing indifference and the fashion of let-well-alone, and his firm, learned, and skilful draughtsmanship may defy the keenest criticism. He has sought the ideal of Art in style, and his fine qualities of mind have made of that style a noble one. When the future is able to judge fairly of the masters of the French school of the nineteenth century, Alexandre Cabanel will stand out as one of the most ingenious, most attractive, and most tasteful decorative painters of its latter half.

HENRY DE CHENNEVIÈRES (C. BELL, Trans.).



V. S. 1. 1.

JEAN LOUIS ERNEST MEISSONIER







THE CARD-PLAYERS (Fac-simile of an Etching by Le Rat)

## JEAN LOUIS ERNEST MEISSONIER



IT would be easy to quote many names in support of the remark that, in France at least, sculptors are born of the populace, while painters are the sons of the citizen class. The demands for the first elements of knowledge are subject to the accident of birth, and social conditions act on genius from the moment when it first sees the light. It is during the lonely hours when he is watching the flock, or with his mother's scissors, that the gifted rustic first tries to mould the clay of his native fields, to rough-hew a stone, or to carve a piece of wood; and if these attempts meet with encouragement, the parents of the future David d'Angers will apprentice him to the stonemason or to the local decorative carver—their neighbour, or perhaps their relative. The other lad—Eugène Delacroix, let us say, or Théodore Rousseau—has from his earliest infancy pencils, pens, and paper, or at any rate the margins of his lesson-books, on which to scribble his copies of prints or his own first ideas. He, too, has the chance that his mother may persuade his half-unwilling father to send him to some neighbouring drawing-school, or a friend's studio. For the most part the results of the

investigations I have made on this matter supplement the theories of physiologists, and confirm the law of atavism. The mother is characterised by one of those nervous temperaments which are peculiarly liable to subtle impressions; is not unfrequently an artist herself, or a musician, familiar with the writings of the poets, and original and bright in her ideas, though not perhaps always correct in her mode of expressing them.

Meissonier is no exception to this rule; he betrays the double influence of soil and blood. He was born in 1815 at Lyons. His father was a colonial broker, to whom fortune did not come till late in life. His mother's nature and education were altogether different. She had learnt to paint on china and on ivory under the instruction of the



A BOOKWORM.

once famous Madame Jacottot, and although she died too young to have any direct influence on her son, he no doubt inherited from her the germ of artistic instincts, with a personal resemblance and a highly nervous temperament, which betrays itself by tears at the hearing of fine music, and by an intense susceptibility to every form of criticism. He came to Paris in his early years, and was sent as day scholar to a school in the Rue des Francs-Bourgeois. A school report, which has turned up among some family papers, states that Ernest showed a reprehensible tendency to draw on his copy-books in preference to attending to his master. His first years were spent under his father's roof, a druggist's shop in the Rue des Écouffes. He there discovered in a cupboard a box of colours that had belonged to his mother, and in these he revelled. Drugs and spices were not in his line, and he was confirmed in this opinion by one of his companions, Louis Steinheil, who sealed his

fate. In those early days there was a rapid transition from the painters then in repute, and not only fashionable, but in some cases ennobled, such as Regnault, Gérard, and Gros, to the artists of more modern stamp, who got their pictures admitted to the Salon or obtained a commission to decorate a café in vogue in their quarter of the town. The Romanticists were already hoisting their flag, bedaubed with vermillion and Veronese green, letting their beards grow, and publicly defying the disciples of David. A father might well pause and doubt. Meissonier's father, however, gave way, and the lad gained leave to study drawing heads with chalk and stump under Jules Potier, once the holder of the "Grand Prix de Rome," and whose family was connected with that of the Meissoniers. But ere long Ernest escaped from his limited and timid teaching, and set to work under Léon Cogniet. Here again he remained hardly four months.

These rapid changes most certainly had a serious effect on his career as an artist. He worked but little, as others did, from the cast or the living model. He spent whole days in a paddock close to the studio, where Cogniet was designing his picturesque ceiling for the Louvre, representing the *Campaign in Egypt*, working for days at a time from soldiers in uniform, dragoons, and artillery with their horses. It was in these hours of intercourse with the master, who troubled himself but little with the direct instruction of his pupils, that Meissonier acquired that habit of observing individuality which is the note of all his work. Any one who examines it can see at a glance that he did not learn under the influence of academic teaching, on the benches of the École des Beaux-Arts. He studies a stirrup as carefully as a knee-bone, and the deltoid muscle is no more sacred in his eyes than the worsted epaulette that adorns it.

The lad had come here only with a view to learning a business that should do him credit. Life was hard, or at any rate barren, but youth is checked by the thorn-bush only to pluck its flowers. Here was one made for the struggle. He was determined to succeed, to achieve such a position as was open to the young artists of that day

very different from those of the present generation, on whom fashion hastens to confer the Cross of Honour, wealth, and ease. His companions were brave lads, who, like himself, aimed at being no burden to their parents, and who were studying in order to work. Steinheil, who became a distinguished man in his own line



A SCENE FROM THE ARTIST'S SKETCH-BOOK.



(the painting of glass windows in the styles of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and who would have been a most finished painter of easel pictures); Daumier, the greatest caricaturist France can boast of; Daubigny, who, before he became a landscape painter, was a capital draughtsman and etcher; Geoffroy Dechaume and Pascal, the sculptors, and Trimolet.

Trimolet, now forgotten, having died young, worn out by consumption, want, and the anxiety with which he worked, was the leader of the group. He has left some sketches of Paris which are admirable in feeling. He etched little plates for the annuals and almanacks, brimming over with grotesque figures; he executed humorous illustrations for a series of popular songs, and painted one picture only, a masterpiece of accurate observation and skilful treatment: the subject is *Soldiers distributing Soup to the Poor*. Those who knew him remember him as a man of a superior nature. He had an instinctive mastery of what has since been designated with more or less precision as Naturalism. Some rats in a *Batrachomachia* have all the exactitude that we see in animals



SOLDIERS PLAYING DICE  
(From the Drawing on Wood by the Artist).

drawn by Albert Dürer. Trimolet felt and always preached that the French school had sacrificed its originality by following the Roman method, and that it must resuscitate its powers by a study of the Flemish and Dutch painters, from Van Eyck in his severity to the graceful and light-hearted Craesbeck.

By his advice Meissonier went to draw at the Louvre from those masters, who attracted him by their truthfulness of action, of costume, of accessories, and of local colouring and tone. But he had not the time to make finished copies of them; besides, the idea of becoming a copyist was odious to his independent nature. His father made him an allowance of fifteen francs (twelve shillings) a month and a dinner every Wednesday; but it must be added that he purchased of him from time to time a little water-colour drawing. One of these has been preserved, *The Midnight Watch finding a Body at a Street-corner*, a subject suggested by romance, the stage, history, the studio, or the Salons.

Meissonier's wish was to study under Paul Delaroche, whom he actually saw at work on *The Death of Lady Jane Grey*; but the fee being twenty francs a month, it was beyond his means. He and Trimolet therefore set to work to paint fans and saintly emblems for the booksellers of the Rue St. Jacques. This street was at that time, only on a much more humble scale, what the Rue Lafitte was somewhat later, and what some exporters

are slow. No one expected to find glory there, but it supplied the wherewithal to pay for a dinner, a bedroom, a model, the colourman, and even a friendly day out now and then in the suburbs along the banks of the Seine.

Once Trimolet went with his friend to a publisher for whom Meissonier had designed, with all the pains he could command, four little sepia drawings to illustrate a fairy tale that was to appear in some magazine. The drawings were pitilessly refused. The first woodcuts by Meissonier with a date that I have been able to meet with were executed in 1835, and are in a *Bible de Royaumont*, brought out by Léon Curmer. They are, however, hardly to be distinguished from others by Wattier, Camille Rogier, Levasseur, Devéria, and Gérard Séguin, at that time fashionable illustrators.

Meissonier himself told me not long since that the first time he went to call on Curmer, when still quite young and full of enterprise, he was introduced by Marville, who was a second-rate but prolific designer and engraver. The publisher, distrusting him, "had no

work to give him at present." In the course of the conversation, to give himself some little importance, Meissonier mentioned the Brothers Johannot, then at the height of popularity. "Do you know them?" "Yes, indeed, and so well that I spent only last Sunday in modelling the portrait of one of them." The talk then turned on modelling, which was the hobby of all three. The young artist offered to make a likeness of Curmer himself, and on the following Sunday, when he went to the studio for the purpose, he commissioned Meissonier, as a civility, to make him a water-colour drawing as a specimen, the subject to be taken out of the Old Testament. It was Marville again who got him employment on the new edition of *Paul et Virginie* that Curmer was getting up, and for which he will always be remembered. "I have nothing but landscape at present," said the cautious publisher, and he intrusted a sketch by an amateur to Meissonier, who transformed it into a water-colour drawing which I have seen and which is quite charming—the bay where Virginia is buried, *La Baie du Tombeau*.

He did not contribute largely to this *Paul et Virginie*. The earliest beams of his dawning fame fell on the minute and beautiful designs for *La*



THE SMOKER  
FROM THE *PAUL ET VIRGINIE*, BY CURMER

*Chaumière Indienne*. He had been fond of working in the hothouses of the Jardin des Plantes, where tropical growths spread luxuriantly; and he had studied, too, the windows of the curiosity-shops with outside stalls covered with foreign curiosities, which used to stand in a row on the Place du Carrousel, near the entrance to the Louvre. In arranging these compositions he had only to choose in his portfolios to give them a striking realism at that time little sought for by designers for books. He had under his hand studies from which to elaborate an initial letter with a lily broken by a storm, a trophy of Indian weapons, or of Javanese musical instruments. The text of the work attracted his fancy; "it suggests labour." The young artist heaped his table with books bound in parchment or in vellum that he had picked up for a few sous at the stalls on the quays, and he set to work to copy with the exactitude of an early master the sheen of the edges, the ribs on the back, the scraps of paper, and the silk ribbon markers. Within the limits of one of these miniature vignettes not more than an inch and a half square, we see, for instance, two prints stuck against the wall of a room, one of which represents *The Pariah thinking of the English Doctor*, the other *The Doctor thinking of the Pariah*; and "between them, hanging to a nail, are the Englishman's leather-covered pipe with its amber mouthpiece, and

the Pariah's, made of a bamboo stem with a clay bowl." A ticket attached by two pins tells us that they are "from M. Meissonier's collection."

What pencils, what eyes, what unflinching patience he must have had for the woodcuts of this rare and beautiful work! There is not a line that will not bear inspection with the magnifying glass, and even as it is, the engraver has omitted some and inevitably altered the quality of other lines. Trustworthy engravers in *fac-simile* were so scarce in France in 1835 that the publisher had recourse to English cutters. But these delightful landscapes, alive with the native flora and fauna—the serene peace of the Pariah's hut—the meetings "of Jewish rabbis, Protestant ministers, Lutheran presbyters, and Catholic doctors," with their elbows on the green cloth in the hall where "Parisian academicians, Del la Cruscan and Arcadian philosophers, Greek popes, Turkish mollahs, Arab sheiks, Persian and Indian pundits, who had failed to throw any light on the three thousand five hundred questions proposed by the Royal Society of London, dozed and disputed to their hearts' content"—all the elaborate scenes, which so admirably reflect Bernardin de St. Pierre's descriptive accuracy and gentle irony, had lost much of their French grace under these Quakerish gravers.

Meissonier, having made a name by this really amazing series of illustrations, was now in general request. He supplied among other things several typical drawings to *Les Français peints par Eux-mêmes*; and he illustrated an edition in two volumes, now no longer procurable, of *La Chute d'un Ange*, by Lamartine; but he brought no enthusiasm to the task, his genius being observant and literal rather than poetical.

The originality and value of his work had not full justice done to them till they found a rendering at the hands of H. Lavoignat, of all the engravers of the modern realistic school the one whose work reveals the richest quality of colour. In 1846 *La Lazarille de Tormes* was brought out, as a companion to a new edition of the fine *Gil Blas*, illustrated by Jehan Gigoux, which ten years previously had been the first of that series of illustrated works which have been the glory of the modern French press. Twelve years later Meissonier set the seal on his own and Lavoignat's fame by his designs, scattered with a lavish hand through the pages of the third edition—in octavo—of *Les Contes Rémois*, by Chevalier. This volume, which was then sold by Lévy, the publisher, for ten francs, is now worth five hundred. I may take this opportunity of observing incidentally to what a remarkable extent Meissonier's works—whether drawings or paintings—have risen in value and benefited their owners. Supposing that this edition had consisted of no more than one thousand copies, its present value would be five hundred thousand francs; and the value of each copy is constantly increasing with their rarity. They show a steady rise in the book market and the collectors' price-lists. Meissonier subsequently painted pictures from several of these illustrations, with slight variations: *The Bower* ("Le Berceau"), two lovers embracing at the side gate of a park; and *The Handsome Cousin* ("Le Beau Cousin"), which he turned into a shoeing-forge. *Le Choix d'une Messe*, and *The Preacher* ("Le Prédicateur ennemi de la Foule"), have backgrounds drawn from the church of Poissy, not far from Paris. *L'Amant Crucifié* is a very touching scene in the studio of Geoffroy Dechaume, the sculptor, where the little knot of friends used constantly to meet in their youthful days. The artist had made a variety of very charming studies for this work. I have a pen-and ink sketch by him, on the back of a letter, of a willow with a boat moored below, which is introduced in *The Boat-woman*. It may be observed that at that



A MAN READING  
(Fac-simile of the Etching by Rajon).



time women were more employed in such labour than they are now; and it may be added that in these thirty-four designs, in which they are occasionally on the scene, vigorous and sprightly, all that is especially French is extenuated rather than emphasized. His intimacy with the Comte de Cheigné, who was rich, generous, and a devoted friend, laid the foundations of Meissonier's fortunes. Thenceforth he had a public and found purchasers.



FAC-SIMILE FROM THE ARTIST'S SKETCH-BOOK.

Trimolet how to varnish the copper plate, to bite it in the acid bath, and to add the finishing-touches with the dry point. When still a lad, on his way back from Rome, where he had hardly set foot when he was recalled by his mother, who took alarm at the idea of his catching some epidemic then said to be prevalent, he stopped at Lyons, and to earn the wherewithal to pay for a cloak which a confiding tailor let him have on credit, he sketched a few title-pages to songs on lithographic stone. This process was not, however, delicate enough for his precise touch, nor very rich in effect. Etching, on the other hand, sharp, crisp, lending itself to a treatment of outlines like that of a pen-and-ink drawing, and to a quality of shadow not unlike that of lead pencil, was made on purpose for him. It is more than probable that Meissonier's works as an etcher would have proved highly remarkable in every way if his success as a painter had not enabled him to fill his purse—which always has a few holes at the bottom of it, from his luxurious fancies, his liberality to some favourite model, or his mania for perfection, which constantly leads him to begin again with every work that does not reach his own high standard of merit.

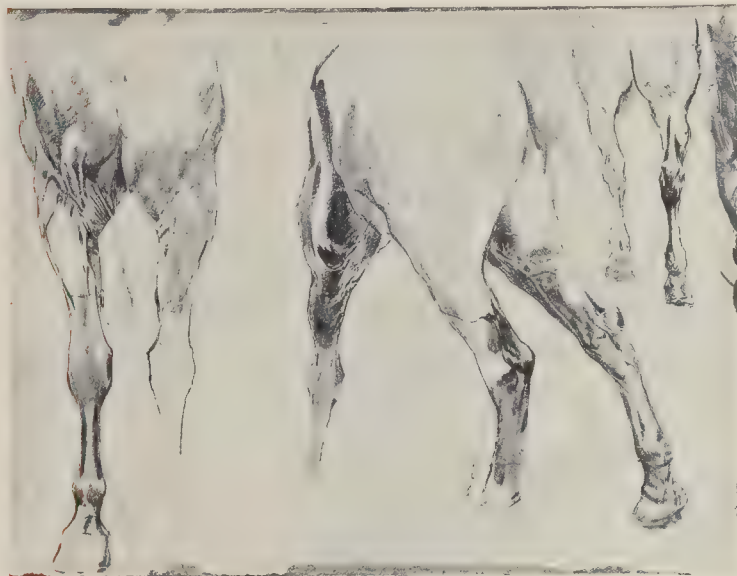
After having etched *A Last Supper* ("La Sainte Table"), which was probably intended for an edition of Bossuet's *Histoire Universelle* which Curmer was bringing out, he executed with marvellous finish a violin, lying on the table, with the bow; this was a card for Vuillaume, the famous instrument maker. Then *Le Petit Fumeur*, standing with his back against a wall, his hand in his pocket, his face shaded by his cocked hat tilted over his forehead. After these he again tried his hand at illustrations for the *Contes Rémois*; a man running away in abject terror, a man catching a trout, and a party of fishermen, studied from a party of his friends standing in a boat. In *Preparations for a Duel* ("Apprêts de Duel") we see the artist as a master of the technicalities of the process. He has succeeded in giving a very effective expression to the face of the young man, dressed in a doublet, who is carefully examining the temper of the sword that he tries by bending it slightly; his short curly hair, too, indicates a bold and elastic spirit. But the distances are unsatisfactory. This is not the case in *Le Fumeur*, the finest of all his etchings; they are comprehensively indicated by a few masterly lines. A middle-aged man—a sort of "Neveu de Rameau" (the hero of a famous novel by Diderot), is sitting with a tall hat on, in an arm-chair with his legs crossed. His right arm is thrown over the back of it, and the other elbow rests on a table, on which stand a pint-

He had now and again made experiments in etching—in his own opinion no more than experiments. But as nothing from his hand merits neglect, we must not pass them over in silence. With one exception, *The Smoker* ("Le Fumeur"), very few copies were printed of any of them, and they already fetch very considerable prices. They will some day be regarded as treasures to be contended for by those collectors who have enough intelligence and taste to seek and value the etchings of the French and English artists of the present day. The art of etching, which is now a specialty in the hands of several dexterous practitioners, was in 1840 an almost lost art. It had been revived about 1830 by Célestin Nanteuil, and after him by Jeanron, a clever artist, now undeservedly neglected. Meissonier and Daubigny learnt at the same time from



FAC-SIMILE FROM THE ARTIST'S SKETCH-BOOK.

pot and a beer-jug. He is smoking a long white clay pipe with great gravity, but with no trace of weariness. In the earliest proofs the quality of the velvet of his breeches is extraordinarily true. Unfortunately the process of steel-facing, which now preserves the sharpness of the texture of the plate for an almost indefinite period, was not invented at the time when this etching appeared in the review, the "Cabinet de l'Amateur et de l'Antiquaire," in 1843, and the plate was soon worn. A proof in which the signature in the lower left-hand corner is legible may fetch nowadays one thousand francs or more. I will complete this list of rare and curious plates by mentioning *Il Signor Annibale*, a study of the costume of Regnier, the admirable actor, in the play of "L'Aventurière"—a doublet with a padded breast; one hand is on his hip, the other on the hilt of his sword. *The Veterans* ("Les Reîtres"), a band of seven old soldiers, four abreast, in jerkins and trunk-hose; some bareheaded, others wearing cloth caps, and laughing, singing, or rollicking, each according to his nature. They answer perfectly to the description given



A STUDY OF HORSES (Fac-simile of the Artist's original Drawing).

by Lazarille de Tormes of his comrades, men of the same kidney: "They are men quite after my own heart, leading the jolliest of lives, free from all airs or pride, and always ready to see the bottom of a bottle, hat in hand, if the wine is good; men of honour, frank and plain-spoken, and so well off for money that I can do no better than pray the Lord to throw me in their way whenever I chance to be thirsty." *The Sergeant of the Watch* ("Le Sergent Rapporteur," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1st Series, 1865) was a minute sketch, done as an experiment with the dry point, on the margin of the plate of *The Smoker*. A sergeant is dictating his report to a comrade, who is sitting at a table; a cloak hangs over a chair. Notwithstanding the minuteness of this work, the battered features and toothless mouth of the sergeant are distinctly visible, and even the buttons, in perspective, of the uniforms with facings. Then how natural is the action of the hand resting on the table of the guard-room! With what humorous attention does the soldier bend over his paper, and scrawl his report in his best copperplate for the colonel. It is, in fact, in the strictest sense, a picture seen through the wrong end of an opera-glass.

At last we come to his pictures. They are so well known—at any rate the photographs are, which give us the spirit of them—that I have wandered round to this part of my subject by less familiar though not less attractive

byways. Meissonier's first appearance at the Salon was in 1834, when he exhibited an oil picture, *Flemish Peasants* ("Les Bourgeois Flamands"), and a water-colour drawing of a young girl handing a pot of beer to a soldier. This last was sold for one hundred francs to a fine-art society in Paris. In 1836 a more intelligent committee admitted two pictures which had been rejected the year before, *The Chess-Players* ("Les Joueurs d'Échecs"), and *The Little Messenger* ("Le Petit Messager"). In 1838, after a stay at Grenoble, where he painted the portraits of two faithful friends, Madame Fériot and her husband, with the elaborate minuteness of Holbein, he sent in a picture of a priest attending a sick man. This, which was bought by the Duc d'Orléans for five hundred francs (₣20), when it was sold with the rest of the Prince's property in 1852, was bought by a Dutch gentleman for four thousand francs (₣160). In 1839, *The English Physician* ("Le Docteur Anglais"), the prototype of the good doctor in *La Chaumière Indienne*, was noticed by the critics. In a periodical called *L'Artiste* we read, over the signature of Jules Janin, " . . . and I was on the point of forgetting a most delightful little "Docteur Anglais" by M. Meissonier, a perfect miniature in oils, exquisitely delicate and humorous."



A STUDY

In 1840 he gave us a *St. Paul, an Isaiah*, and *A Man Reading* ("Un Liseur"). He was then awarded a third-class medal for genre. I saw the *St. Paul*, or the *Isaiah*, or a *Charlemagne* of the same character, at Curmer's, who had paid liberally for it—six hundred francs. The picture, which is almost as large as life, stiff, cold, and devoid of all artistic individuality, is now in the possession of M. Alexandre Dumas, who is one of the painter's great friends. The critics passed them over in silence. These academic figures were never in Meissonier's line, and, by the advice of M. Chenavard, he did not repeat the experiment. The little genre picture, on the other hand, was warmly praised, both by Jules Janin and in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*: "A truly Dutch study if ever there was one. Imagine a venerable worthy, retired from business, his skin as dry as the parchment of his books, shabbily dressed, ill fed, and in spite of all as happy as a king. . . . It is impossible to describe the vividness with which this noble passion is displayed in this little picture, and where on earth did M. Meissonier pick up all these precious little volumes? We can positively smell the heavenly savour of old books!"

In the Salon of 1841, the *Chess-Players* was bought for two thousand francs, and is well worth

six thousand to day. The purchaser was M. Paul Périer, the owner of the finest and most original collection of modern works by Decamps and Théodore Rousseau. Admission into M. Paul Périer's gallery was an envied and substantial honour. The picture was good in colour, and the intensity of expression that it displayed was certain to increase. For this Meissonier received a second-class medal.

In the following year, *A Man Smoking* and *A Young Man playing the Double Bass*, showed him to even greater advantage, and he finally asserted his claims to a high rank by two portraits and *A Painter in his Studio*, in 1843. Two years later he exhibited *A Guard-Room*; *A Young Man looking over some Drawings*, very rich and harmonious in colour; and the *Piquet-Players*. In the *Park of St. Cloud* the landscape was by Français, and Meissonier only painted in the figures, in the costume of the time of Louis XV. From that time the master's characteristic style is so pronounced that we need not follow it stage by stage. A general sketch will suffice. Théophile Gautier has described one detail of his method with his usual acumen. In speaking of a picture of a single figure only, he says, in an article in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, to which I contributed a catalogue of the master's etchings and drawings on wood,



"Meissonier composes his pictures with an amount of skill that was unknown to the masters with which he is often compared." To be perfectly just, however, Gautier ought to have excepted Adrian Ostade. "For example, look at the picture called *A Smoker*—the way in which the figure is set in the middle of the canvas, his elbow on the table, his legs crossed, one hand lying easily across the body, and the hand slipped inside the waistband, his head on one side and waggishly thrown back. All this makes up a composition which, though less conspicuously elaborated than a dramatic scene, nevertheless has its effect on the spectator.



THE CHESS-PLAYERS (Reproduction of a Sepia by the Artist)

Then all the accessories are skilfully arranged to emphasize the pose of the figure. He has been a jolly fellow in his day, that is certain; dressed in a loose, old-fashioned coat of sober grey, his hat evidently carefully brushed, the foot that he waves in the air well shod in a good easy shoe with a silver buckle, and brilliantly polished. He is inhaling the smoke of a large pipe with the serene satisfaction of a good conscience, and puffing it out again in little clouds, with the economy of a man who means to make his pleasure last as long as possible. By his side, on a table with spiral wooden legs, stand a glass and a tankard with a pewter lid. Satisfaction smiles on his face, which is furrowed with deep lines, stamped with

the records of years and habits of order and strict uprightness; you would not hesitate to trust him with your cash-box and account-books. The other man, in a red coat, also has a pipe, and is engaged in precisely the same pastime; but his disordered dress, buttoned all on one side, his cocked hat pulled down over his brows, his cuffs and shirt-frill crumpled by nervous handling, the fevered and uneasy attitude, the droop of his lip as he sucks the clay pipe, his hand fumbling irritably in his empty pocket, all proclaim him an adventurer or a gambler at the end of his tether. He is evidently saying to himself, 'Who the devil can I find to lend me a gold piece, or even a six franc crown?' Even the background, if we study it carefully, tells us something. Here we have not the sober grey panelling, the neat, dark woodwork, but a grimy wall, scratched, smoked, and greasy, suggestive of the low tavern and the disreputable den; and thus we see how there may be smokers and smokers."



A STUDY.

Farther on, Gautier continues as follows: "We have a man standing against a window, so that the white daylight falls aslant on the figure holding a book that absorbs his whole attention. This is not a highly complicated subject, but it is as fascinating as life. We want to know what is in that volume. We almost feel as though we could discover. Others have painted the beaux and the marquises, the dandy abbés and disreputables of the eighteenth century, with their panoply of powder and patches, and paint and pompons, and laced bodices and hoops, of coloured silk stockings and red-heeled shoes, and fans, and screens, and cameos, and crackle china of celadon green, of snuff-boxes, and other frivolities.

We might enlarge still further on his power of subtle expression and intense mental drama. These go far deeper than his qualities of truth in costume and choice of accessories, of silence and of absolute stillness, and of dust finely strewn on the corners of big books; just as we reckon *Les Offres Galantes* as one of Terburg's masterpieces, because, behind the marvellous skill of execution, in an exquisitely truthful scene and atmosphere, we are most attracted to study the crafty smile of the lady to whom the braggart soldier a little doubtful of the result—is offering the gold with an uneasy gallantry. In criticising Art, comparisons are always unjust. Each painter has his own ideal and his own methods of practice, evolved under the conditions peculiar to his time and country. I have referred to Terburg and the Dutch painters merely from a general association of ideas. Meissonier, however, is a fervent admirer of these masters, whose colouring is as fascinating as their drawing is admirable. At the same time I frankly own that I do not hesitate to rank the French painter with them, especially in his happiest vein, when his imagination is fired and he makes figures embody an idea or a sentiment. We may very well eliminate from the series of his work many a man-at-arms, standard-bearer, and veteran captain without diminishing its value. *Opus servile* the ancients used to call the work that has to be done merely to keep the pot on the fire. Meissonier is one of those genial natures to whom a certain amount of luxury is a necessity of life. Those leather belts, those doublets, those blades of which the temper is so shrewdly tested, those gaming quarrels, those guard-room benches on which the worn-out veterans lie dozing, those taverns where clogged dice and prepared packs of cards are produced to empty the pockets of greenhorns, those men on guard—all these have paid for the fields, the gardens, the studio and apparatus, the stables, the harness room with its inlaid oak wainscoting, the carriages, the high-stepping horses of the Château at Poissy. Dealers and amateurs besieged him constantly,



eager and humble, with large money-bags or fat bundles of bank-notes in their hands. We must, however, do the master justice to say that he never allowed himself to be swamped, and that his fine pages—noble thoughts expressed in perfect form—are very numerous.

What, for instance, can be more carefully observed or more utterly apart from a Flemish or Dutch subject, than the attitude of the boy who is finishing his breakfast, and who peels his apple without taking his eyes off his book? Or the smoker in shirt-sleeves who is sitting at an open window with his elbows on the sill, inhaling the sharp fresh air—were his prototypes anything but French? Then *Waiting* ("L'Attente"), a young officer in Louis XIII. dress, who is also sitting at the window, but who fixes a charmed gaze on the path down which his lady or some expected friend ought to be coming while the smoker sees nothing, but lets his eyes wander over the floating clouds and the waving trees. All these panels, minute as they are, bear the stamp of the highest art. For a long time it was the fashion among the academicians to treat them with a certain contempt; but this was not merely an injustice, it was want of taste. The fable of Prometheus who moulded a statue of clay and stole fire from heaven to give it life, is most applicable to this marvellous art, which consists in drawing certain forms, in laying on certain tints, in making a human being alive before us—vehement or placid, drunk or desperate, gloomy or gay—independent of the aspect he may borrow from his costume or accessories.

M. Henriquel Dupont, being asked one day by Meissonier if he could not engrave one of his pictures, promptly replied, "My dear master, when an engraver examines a picture, his first point is to discover what he

can leave out. Now, when I look at one of yours, I see at once that I can leave out nothing." This very acute remark on the part of the learned and skilled engraver exactly epitomises the crowning characteristic of Meissonier's work: every line is indispensable, because everything has been studied with a keen eye and a sound judgment, and every stroke is expressive and necessary. "I paint exactly as other people do," he said to a painter of small subjects who insisted on being admitted to his studio, "only I look carefully. If I want to paint the leg of a chair, I get up if necessary, and go close to it, to be sure of the shape of it. To know how to look is the great thing." It is for lack of knowing how to look at his pictures that all the lithographers, the engravers, and the etchers who have tried to reproduce them have failed. His crisp unerring drawing, his firm and certain touch, which gives the modelling of every form by facets, as it were, as the chisel shapes a piece of wood, his



A MAN-AT-ARMS  
(re-simile of the original drawing).



careful attention to texture, demand, no doubt, a rare gift of intelligent assimilation. Jules Jacquemart, even, who is well known to be conscientious, has failed to give the distinctive character to a large drawing representing—alas! bitter irony of fate—the people of Lorraine collected in front of the *préfecture* at Nancy to hail the Empress Eugénie. He has feared to give over-emphasis, and that is just what would have saved him.

In portraits or figures by Meissonier the drapery is marked by an importance which, without being in the least exaggerated, frankly betrays the habits of wealth, of labour, or of character, of his sitter or ideal. With regard to this, M. Steinheil told me a highly characteristic anecdote. When Meissonier married, he had already amassed a vast quantity of "properties," such as a wonderful collection of plush breeches, of coloured silk stockings, of shoes with buckles, long waistcoats, vests with pockets, felt hats, wigs, canes, and jewellery of all kinds. The old-clothes' mart at the Temple in Paris at that time offered tempting bargains to costumiers and artists in all the old clothes of the eighteenth century. Meissonier had collected materials for dressing from head to foot, peasants and citizens, fine gentlemen, and soldiers of the Old Guard. The only thing wanting was under-



AUGUSTUS  
From the Artist's Sketch-book.

linen; that, for a variety of obvious reasons, being what had generally perished. It was in vain that he made his wife cut out shirts, frills, and cuffs. When he studied an engraving by Gravelot, or an etching by Chodowiecki, he could see at once that the linen did not fall in the same folds as that in which he had dressed his model. He raged and stormed, but all in vain. One day he came in triumphant. He had been to the Bibliothèque Royale; he had asked for the "Encyclopædia," and under the heading "Linen" he had learnt that linen and cambric were formerly cut on the cross and not by a straight thread as is now the custom. Hence the fall of the folds was much softer. The shade of Diderot must have looked on with a smile!

But this care as applied to the details of costume, and especially to the flow of folds, is by no means puerile. Ingrès also devoted great attention to it, and to this he owed the particular effect in his pencil portraits, which rank among the finest of his works. I may here quote a story told by Sainte-Beuve in his "*Mémoires de Malouet*," which supports our painter's practice by the authority of a famous actor. . . . "The house where Malouet left his two daughters when he went to Guiana belonged to the Chabanon family. At times it

was very quiet, but at others there was plenty of amusement. Then, the best society of Paris met there. Plays were acted. . . . Prévile was once taking a part, and at the same time superintending the rehearsals, and the first thing he impressed on his fellow-actors was that when they were to act in the evening they should dress for their parts in the morning, so as to crease the coats well—that was his phrase—that they might not look new and borrowed for the occasion. The consequence was that the amiable visitors to the house ran about the garden in full costume all day, to the great astonishment of the peasants who peeped at them over the hedge; and they looked as if they were playing at being shepherds and shepherdesses every day. . . ."

Meissonier is one of our great portrait painters. He has no fancy for making a composition in which the accessories crowd out the sitter; he surrounds him with such adjuncts as suggest his usual habits. He observes him narrowly, studies his natural attitudes and gestures, even his tricks and mannerisms. In the portrait of *Alexandre Dumas fils*,—which is, however, by no means one of his finest—he has not failed to show the long legs devoid of calves which betray his negro ancestry; and the conspicuous position given to a carved wood cabinet indicates the writer's somewhat loud taste in such matters. The ironical smile that lingers on his lips and twinkles in his eyes stamps him a dramatist, inexorable to his own times. The portrait of *M. Gustave Delahante*, painted about 1865, was startlingly truthful, full of intelligent apprehension and strength in repose. The eyes are those of a money-dealer; they look straight into yours; the mouth sensually ruddy, the hands elegant, the frame powerful, but disfigured by too early obesity; the face shrewd, the features firmly moulded. We see a man of birth and breeding, an epicurean who has had great strokes of fortune. Altogether, a painting that is in every respect



STUDY FOR THE FICKLE — THE SON ZAN'ER

essentially French, and reminds us of some portraits, by Louis Tocqué, of the financiers of the eighteenth century. It is, to my mind, one of the greatest works that the existing school has produced at all. The peculiarly *modern* quality, and the freedom of treatment, leave the academic style of Ingres, with its rounded modelling, far behind—as, for instance, in his over-praised portrait of Bertin, of the *Débats*.

Another portrait, though calmer in feeling, is not inferior. It was exhibited at the "Cercle de l'Union Artistique" in the Place Vendôme, in 1882, and again in the Triennial Salon of 1883. It is that of *M. Victor Lefranc*, a typical representative of the French citizen who has thrown himself into politics. Meissonier has painted him in his lawyer's office, to which he returned on retiring from the Ministry, seated by tables loaded by well-read books, that are full of little paper marks sticking out from their red edges; his hands rest on the arms of an elbow chair, in the attitude of a man who is listening in order to decide and reply. These hands, drawn with astonishing skill, with their deeply-inserted nails, and veins that stand out from a skin that has grown waxen from a sedentary life in the softened light of the house, might give a lesson in nature to the crablike claws filled out with flesh which Ingres—by way of style—used to attach to the arms of those who trusted him to perpetuate their appearance. *M. Victor Lefranc*, then more than seventy, is painted in an easy-fitting waistcoat, with a loosely-tied black satin cravat. These commonplace details have, of course, but a small interest for his contemporaries. Future generations will see in them the record of the habitual dress of a particular class at a certain period of history. The face is in full light, and plainly reveals the determination and tenacity of the Basque race, and the honest purpose of a life that has been devoted to patriotism rather than to money-making. The master has had the good taste and courage to let it be seen that one of his sitter's eyelids had a permanent droop; the mouth is thin lippered and reserved, the chin square; he wears short white whiskers, and tufted hair with silvery lights. The whole tone is too ruddy; this is a fault we often find in Meissonier's later works. In the same Salon he exhibited a portrait of the wife of a rich American living at Paris, *Mrs. Mackay*. She is standing dressed ready to go out, and buttoning her long *Suède* leather gloves; the light falls tenderly on the rosy skin and delicate veins of the other hand; the whole effect is a little hard, but when examined closely the expressive correctness of the drawing is amazing in the curve of the eyelids and of the lips and the joints of the fingers, in the warmth of the blood under the skin, and in the subtle suggestions of air and look which stamp the American race.

Meissonier has, however, but rarely painted women, though he has painted family groups. This last year again he gave us a figure of a woman standing to sing by the side of a man seated at an organ, who gazes at her with tears in his eyes. The intention was better than the execution. Grace was lacking—that grace which can give even an ugly woman a reputation for charm, though everything else may be wanting. This "undulating and weird being" has not perhaps known how to sit—or stand—to a painter. Nervous jerks have unconsciously modified her attitude, features, and expression, as clouds do passing across a landscape on a day when electric tension affects the nerves of nature.

We must go back to the Salon of 1850-51, to find an early example of those of Meissonier's pictures which will lead us to the discussion of his recent subjects. It was entitled *A Reminiscence of the Civil War* ("Souvenir de la Guerre Civile"). He had picked up this sad reminiscence, if I mistake not, during the month of June, 1848. The first rays of dawn light up the scene; bodies in red military trousers are seen lying among the paving-stones that have formed a barricade; the street is deserted, the solitude and silence are appalling. This picture, which is very simply executed and quite small, is now at Brussels, in the possession of *Mme. Van Praët*. Meissonier repeated the subject for *Eugène Delacroix* in water-colour. If possible the drawing is even more eloquent.

It was the war with Italy which transformed the painter of genre into a painter of military subjects. Memories were slumbering in his mind of the studies he had made of uniforms and scarred veterans in *Léon Cogniet's* garden, and they were vividly aroused when war was declared with Austria. Meissonier was better prepared than any other painter for this line of work, for his wealth, already considerable, allowed of his keeping both heavy and high-bred horses in his stables at Poissy. Meissonier, who is but little taller than *M. Thiers*, is devoted, like him and many other small-made men, to horse exercise, which gives an elegant and upright carriage. Northern Italy, where the fields of the wars of the Republic were about to be revisited—and he himself has told me that "*L'Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*" is one of the books he keeps by his pillow—attracted him by the spell of its associations, the charm of its delightful scenery, and the reflection of its past glories. He was

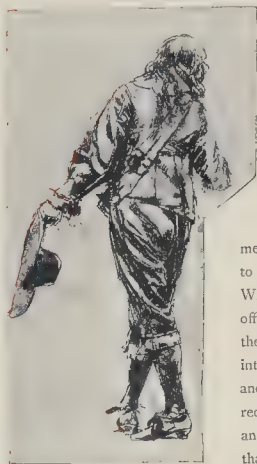


intimately acquainted with some of the officers of the Imperial staff. The Emperor himself was quite ready to accept the presence of an historiographer of such calibre, who, besides, offered his services unpaid.

"No sooner was war declared," as we read in some notes which were made under the inspiration of the artist himself, "than Meissonier attached himself to the staff, and resolved to be the Van der Meulen of the campaign. He

was always on the scene of operations, taking sketches and notes, and he was present at the battle of Solferino. I one day asked Meissonier whether Napoleon had sat for this picture. 'Certainly,' he replied, 'and that was just my chief difficulty. You know my mania for exactitude. I went back to Solferino to study the landscape from nature, and you may imagine how important it was to me that the Emperor should stand in position, if it were only for five minutes. I set to work rather cleverly I think. I began to sketch the picture; then I invited an officer of my acquaintance to

give me his advice upon it, from a purely military point of view. He had, as I knew, been at Solferino. I laid myself out to make him tell me the share he had taken in the action, and so drew him on till I proposed to represent him as one of the actors in the scene. This he gladly agreed to. When I had done his portrait, with great success, he spoke of it to his fellow-officers, who came to see it, and offered in their turn to sit to me. One of them knew Marshal Magnan, and he brought Fleury, who in his turn introduced Lebœuf. Lebœuf begged me to show my work to the Emperor, and to that end procured me an invitation to Fontainebleau. Napoleon III, received me graciously, and after having examined the canvas for a long time, and seeing that only one figure was wanting, he asked me who, to my mind, that figure ought to be? 'Why, your Majesty, of course.' 'Then you will introduce my portrait,' said he; 'how will you manage that?' 'From memory, and by the help of published prints.' 'But a sitting would be much better,'



A STUDY  
(From the Artist's Sketch-book).

replied the Emperor; 'does not it strike you so, M. Meissonier?' 'No doubt, Sire, but—' 'Well, then, nothing can be simpler; we will ride out together and talk, and you can study me at your leisure.'

"Enchanted with the opportunity," continued the painter, "I soon had laid a quite Mephistophelian plot. My old friend Jadin has, as it happens, a studio at Fontainebleau. I contrived to ride in the direction of his house, and when we were at the door I boldly proposed to the Emperor that we should pay the worthy man a visit. He laughed but agreed, and we dropped in on Jadin, who was not expecting either of us, but was smoking his pipe in his shooting-coat. The Emperor, who was excessively amused at the adventure, would not allow Jadin to disturb himself. He made himself a cigarette, and seating himself astride on a chair he gave himself up to chat. As for me, I simply seized the first pencil I could lay my hands on and set to work to draw. This improvised sitting lasted a good half-hour. The result was that I was able to finish not only the Solferino, but another little picture, which is also in the Luxembourg."

Again we read in these notes, which must be much the same in tenor as the memoirs which it is no secret that Meissonier is compiling:—

"The war of 1870-71 had made a deep impression on the master's mind, for he is an ardent patriot. It was his ambition to follow the progress of the army as he had done in the campaign in Italy; but alas! he hoped to look on at victories, and he witnessed nothing but disasters.

"As he knew several of the officers of the army at Metz, he went to join them at that place. They came out to meet him as soon as his little white horse was visible in the distance. 'Come on, come on,' they cried, 'we will soon give you subjects to paint.' For hope was still in the ascendant, and any prophecy of the fate in store for their flag would have been taken very much amiss by these brave soldiers. Meissonier was admitted



A STUDY  
(From the Artist's Sketch-book).

to the officers' mess, and regarded as one of themselves. He lived with the staff, liked by all, and was looked upon as the future painter of the successes they promised themselves; but ere long the sky darkened; fortune had deserted her brave followers, and the artist had the delicacy to feel that his presence was too painful to his friends, who saw that they had been betrayed. 'What good can you do here?' asked they, 'you may die of hunger and despair with us, or be killed for nothing by a shell; but, in the first place, that is not your business in life, and in the second you can contribute to the glory of France by sticking to what is your business. Perhaps you will have better luck in Paris.' Notwithstanding his eager wish to share their critical fortunes, Meissonier yielded to their representations. He set out the day before the battle of Borny was fought, provided with two passes with official seals. He was riding a horse which he was particularly fond of, having, in fact, left the others at Metz for the use of his friends. This Odyssey of a man of fifty, wandering along the high roads, can only be worthily related by himself. He took the road to Verdun, and at every turn he was arrested as a spy. At Etain he was imprisoned, and it was only his being so well known by sight that procured him his liberty. He reached Poissy three days later, and there his first care was to organise a troop of Gardes Nationales. When, somewhat later, after Sedan, Paris was surrounded, Meissonier hastened to enter the city."

It may be added that one of the first audiences granted to any one by Gambetta as Minister of War, after the 5th September, was to Meissonier. He came to offer his services to his country, entreating to be appointed préfet in one of the invaded or threatened Departments. He was, however, over-persuaded on this point, and was given a high position on the staff of the Garde Nationale. The Parisian populace seeing here, there, and everywhere about the boulevards the little ruddy-faced man with his long grey beard and his legs encased in tightly-fitting doeskin breeches, would often salute him as a colonel of Sappers.

We find again in these unpublished notes, which he has trusted in my hands, that the artist proposed to commemorate the defence of Paris by painting a picture which he intended to present to the city. This work, which never got beyond a sketch, was to be of very large size. Paris, under the form of a tall female figure, stands on a hill, holding in her hand the hilt of a broken sword. Wrapped in the drapery of her train lies a young man, as though sleeping—the hapless Henri Regnault. Behind her is a group of other victims during the siege, among whom may be recognised Ernest Baroche and Franceschi. In the foreground a wounded horse neighs as he tries to scramble to his feet. To the left, across a stormy sky, shot with fantastic gleams of light, an avenging goddess is seen approaching: Famine, with the Prussian eagle on her wrist, its wings flapping greedily like a hawk's.

Meissonier has been sometimes maliciously accused of making a too free use of photography. I do not doubt that, like every other artist, he avails himself of its aid to recall to his mind some accident of form or aspect, or some detail of costume. But this is not only legitimate, but intelligent; for not unfrequently the lens has seen facts that have escaped the eye, and registered a detail that was too transient for the preoccupied observer. But I can adduce complete and decisive proof that he works resolutely from nature.

In 1862, I went to the country house which the artist has had built at Poissy, with a perfection of taste that does him honour. I was told that "Monsieur" was in his studio in the courtyard. I went to this studio, a spacious room, crowded with sketches of every description, and studies of horses modelled in wax on wooden stands. I was waiting there for my host, when, trying to discover the source of a line of brighter light that came in through the chink of a door, I found Meissonier in a small courtyard beyond, sitting in the full sunlight on a block made to imitate a horse, in riding-boots, white kerseymere breeches, and full uniform of the Imperial Grenadier Guards, his breast covered with decorations, and over all the grey greatcoat—the famous "Redingote grise." He was mounted on a saddle that had been lent to him by Prince Louis Napoleon. In his hand he held a drawing-block, and was carefully making a study of himself from a long mirror that was tilted in front of him. It was midsummer, and the heat was terrific. "My model cannot sit for Napoleon," he exclaimed, "and I have exactly his legs." This was one of his numerous studies for his picture of *Friedland*.

In private Meissonier is a most genial companion. He has amused himself by sketching large figures in a very dashing vein of humour on the walls of the stairs and passage leading to the studio in his country house, which is unmistakably Dutch in style: a figure on horseback, à la Henri IV.; a Spanish swashbuckler; a figure of Punch reading a letter with a deeply pathetic air; and a republican volunteer, his flint-lock on his shoulder; then another Punch, but this one has a cudgel in his hand, and you had best leave him alone.

His judgment is cool, his imagination vivid, his temperament eager but under control. He has aged a good



THE HOUSE IN PARIS, FROM THE BOULEVARD MALL-SHERBEE





deal during the last few years, and rather takes advantage of his white, flowing beard, with its straggling double point. This lends him a somewhat sentimental aspect at the meetings of the Academy, which he regularly attends; but we nevertheless cannot fail to see in his well-shaped forehead, his soft but eager eyes, his well-set figure, bowed legs, and strong hands, an interesting type of the French middle class -inquiring, industrious,



THE STUDIO AT PARIS.

honest, and thoroughly intelligent. His daughter is well married, and his son, without being an exceptional artist, is a conscientious painter.

He offered himself as a candidate for the Institut, but without cringing, and was unanimously elected in 1861. That he has turned out distinguished pupils is well known; I need only name Nittis, Fortuny, and Détaillé.

Meissonier's ideal is perhaps a somewhat narrow one, though his manner has gained in dignity since he gave up the costume of a past age, though he treated it so delightfully, and since his study of Thiers's "History of the First Napoleon" opened up to him a line more worthy of his singular genius for military subjects. His teaching of drawing must certainly be admirable; and it is much to be regretted that his passion for personal work should have kept him from becoming a Professor at the *École des Beaux-Arts*. When, quite recently, certain details were altered in the technical teaching and working order of this public school of Art—which, being in the hands of several professors, could, it was thought, be made more practically serviceable to the State which supported it—unfortunately, Meissonier refused to become one of the teachers there.

I have frequently seen Meissonier at work, and his method gives the clue to the whole result. He does not use paint-brushes set in humming-birds' quills, as the critics who write in their own back-rooms are so fond of



THE HOUSE AT POISSY.

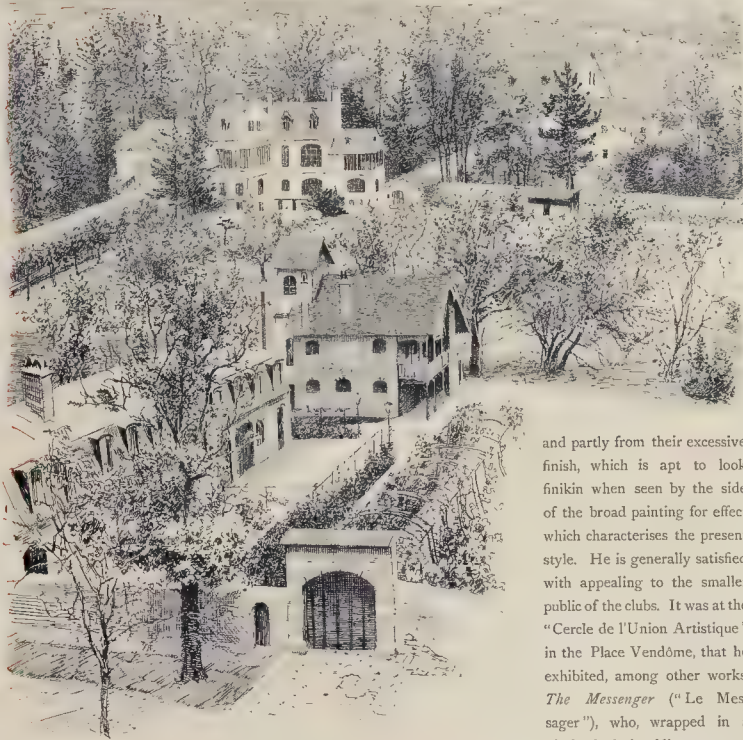
asserting, but ordinary bristle and sable brushes; of the finest quality, no doubt, but by no means microscopic. In 1865 he used to employ a model named Jacob Leusen, a little, fair, lean-shanked man, who could sit or stand with the fixity of a statue. I saw him in a hussar's dress; Meissonier had spent at least two hours merely in working at the carbine slung over his shoulder. To me it seemed perfect, both in perspective, in texture, and in weight and balance, so to speak. But the painter grumbled, scolded, got up and sat down again fifty times. "It will not do," he said, "I am a bungler; I can't paint. No one but Gérôme knows how to paint without a second thought. I shall never be a painter. It is disgusting; . . ." and taking up a razor, he carefully shaved off all he had just painted in. I was thunderstruck. In point of fact the picture was finished and admirable. François Petit, a dealer of consummate taste and courage, who has largely aided the artist in his career, had written that very morning to say that he would call for it the next day. It had been promised for a year past, and resold. But it did not satisfy the master's conscientiousness.

Meissonier had been most successful at the Salon of 1855. But in 1878 his contributions were less well



spoken of. Nevertheless the *Campagne de 1814* and the *Friedland* are works of a high order of merit. An amateur who has only recently begun to collect, M. Secrétan, gave no less than four hundred thousand francs (£16,000) for the latter picture.

Since that time Meissonier has almost given up exhibiting at the annual Salons. He is not at his ease there, partly in consequence of the small size of his pictures, which are swamped among so many huge canvases,



THE HOUSE AT POISSY  
(View of the Gardens and Outbuildings)

and partly from their excessive finish, which is apt to look finikin when seen by the side of the broad painting for effect which characterises the present style. He is generally satisfied with appealing to the smaller public of the clubs. It was at the "Cercle de l'Union Artistique" in the Place Vendôme, that he exhibited, among other works, *The Messenger* ("Le Messager"), who, wrapped in a black cloak, is riding across a dreary landscape, under a gloomy sky, to carry some im-

portant secret order to Condé's army. The pictures he has sent to the triennial exhibition have given rise to much adverse criticism. We have been almost singular, among the press critics, in praising him consistently, not only for the work of his past years, but for that he still can do. I find nothing to alter in the words that I wrote with perfect sincerity in *La République Française*, September 26th, 1883, before *The Arrival* ("L'Arrivée des Hôtes")—a small picture, painted only for the market—had been hung. Meissonier had sent in *The Song* ("Le Chant"), in which a man, dressed in red velvet, is sitting at an organ, and accompanying, with a look of intense

passion, a woman who stands at his side singing; *La Madone del Baccio*, a study, rather hard in effect, done in S. Mark's at Venice; and *Le Guide*, an incident of the French campaign on the Rhine and Moselle in 1797. A party of dragoons are coming down a path through a wood, guided by an Alsatian, who walks in front, quite cool and sure, with his pipe between his teeth, though under strict surveillance. What an infinite variety of character we can trace in these different faces.

In spite of the small scale on which he has chosen to work, Meissonier can compare as a draughtsman with the masters of any great period of Art. It would be utterly unjust not to set his name in the same rank as those of the other painters who have shed such substantial glory on France during the middle of this century—Delacroix, Rousseau, Millet, Courbet, Corot, Daumier. He does not, it is true, open the gates of the "great beyond," which is so dear to the poetic, or would-be poetic, soul, but he notes the essential truths of reality with that certainty of knowledge which affords to the modern mind a field new, indeed, but not less attractive than the land of dreams.

PHILIPPE BURTY (CLARA BELL, Trans.).



THE STUDIO AT JOIGNY

